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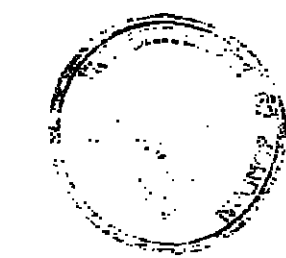
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Palestinian team to go to U.S.

AMMAN (R) — Palestinian negotiators will meet U.S. officials in Washington again before deciding whether to attend the next round of Middle East peace talks on April 20, the chief Palestinian delegate said Friday. "We will be leaving to Washington in mid-April for further discussions with the U.S. administration on our requests," Haidar Abdul Shafi told Reuters. He rejected comments by a senior U.S. official that the Palestinians could expect "good things to happen" only after they agree to return to the negotiating table. Dr. Abdul Shafi said Palestinians would not accept "undefined promises" and wanted a clear response to their conditions for resuming peace talks. In Tunis, an envoy from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak saw Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali Friday in connection with the peace talks. Osama Al Baz, a senior adviser to Mr. Mubarak, briefed Mr. Arafat on the Egyptian president's talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington earlier this week. The Palestinian news agency Wafa said he gave Mr. Arafat a message from Mr. Mubarak and they discussed ways of removing obstacles to a resumption of the peace talks.



Jordan Times

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Nile cruise boat comes under gunfire

CAIRO (AP) — Gunshots smashed an unknown number of windows Thursday night on a Nile cruise boat carrying 35 German tourists in southern Egypt. Police blamed stray shots from overzealous merrymakers at a wedding. A radio message from the long-distance cruiser Nora II reported no injuries among passengers or crew, police said. The incident occurred at Koussiya, a village near Assiut, 200 kilometres south of Cairo.

Olmert to challenge Kolk in elections

TEL AVIV (AP) — A former right-wing government minister has said he will face off against veteran Teddy Kolk in municipal elections in occupied Jerusalem this November. The announcement by Ehud Olmert, formerly health minister in governments led by the hawkish Likud party, is significant because he is considered a heavyweight candidate. In the 1989 elections, an unknown Likud party activist ran opposite Mr. Kolk because no serious Likud contender believed he could unseat the mayor, who has presided over the occupied city since 1965.

Saudi behead seven

DUBAI (R) — Seven convicted criminals — three Pakistanis, three Saudis nationals and an Egyptian — were beheaded in Saudi Arabia Friday. Friday's executions, announced by the Interior Ministry and reported by regional news agencies, bring the total beheaded in the kingdom to more than 30 this year.

Luxembourg upgrades PLO

TUNIS (R) — Luxembourg has upgraded the status of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in the country to the rank of "general delegation," the Palestinian news agency Wafa said Friday. Other European countries including Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain have also upgraded the status of former PLO information offices in recent years. "General delegation" does not represent full diplomatic recognition.

Belarus parliament agrees Russia pact

MINSK, Belarus (R) — Parliament in the former Soviet Republic of Belarus agreed Friday to a collective security pact with Russia despite objections by the country's leader and nationalist opposition. Parliament voted 188 to 34 for the pact which calls for a unified defence policy with Moscow. Belarusian leader Stanislav Shushkevich immediately called for a referendum, vowing to resign if voters backed the accord.

Yemeni soldiers hold officers hostage

SANAA (R) — Soldiers on a Yemeni island have held their commander and other officers captive for 10 days in a dispute over promotions, pay and misuse of funds, a weekly newspaper said Friday. The mutineers on the Red Sea island of Kamaran, who accuse their commander Colonel Abbas Al Shami of withholding pay and blackmailing them over promotions, cut off all communication to the island, 80 kilometres northwest of Hudaida port, the trade union weekly Sawt Al Umami said. They refused to allow army Deputy Chief of Staff Colonel Ali Mohammad Salah to visit to negotiate the officers' release. The mutineers are insisting on talking to President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Vice President Ali Salem Al Baidh or Defence Minister Hashem Qassim Taher, the paper said.

OIC to set up Afghan peace office

KABUL (R) — The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is to set up a peace monitoring office in the shell-shattered Afghan capital, the first such action by the Islamic body, an official said Friday. "This will be the first such experience in OIC history and with good intentions we hope it will be a success," said OIC Assistant Secretary General Sheikh Ibrahim Baqr in an interview at the presidential palace in Kabul.

U.S. says its planes dropped bombs in Iraq after coming under fire

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. jets Friday dropped cluster bombs on an Iraqi anti-aircraft site in the northern "no-fly" zone after the gunners opened fire on the warplanes, the U.S. government said.

State Department spokesman Richard A. Boucher said the U.S. planes were on a routine monitoring mission in the "no-fly" zone. Mr. Boucher said none of the planes were hit.

The U.S. fighter planes — three F-16s and an F4G — were being tracked by Iraqi radar before they were fired on, said a statement from the U.S. European command in Stuttgart, Germany.

In response, the three F-16s dropped four cluster bombs on the artillery site, said the statement, read by a Pentagon spokesman.

The U.S. planes then returned to Incirlik air base in Turkey, the

statement added. The artillery fired on the U.S. jets at 1:05 p.m. Iraqi time, north of the 36th Parallel, said the Pentagon spokesman.

It was not clear whether the U.S. planes hit the artillery, the statement added.

But Iraq said a soldier guarding a dam was wounded in the latest exchange. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying the country dropping the bombs would "bear responsibility for this aggressive and provocative behaviour."

It did not name the United States. The spokesman said the soldier was wounded while on guard duty at the U.S. State Department, spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States and its coalition partners remained determined to enforce the "no-fly" zone.

The last such incident over Iraq occurred Feb. 3, when two

French F-1 Mirage reconnaissance aircraft were fired upon.

The Iraqi report said: "At about 1 p.m. (0900 GMT) two planes dropped thermal flares ... over the Saddam Dam region."

"Ten minutes after that the same planes, flying at high altitudes, dropped three containers of cluster bombs on one of our military positions intended for the defence of the dam."

"This aggression led to the wounding of one of our valiant soldiers. It described the bombing as aggressive and provocative behaviour. It blamed the United States, France and Britain, saying only these countries had planes in the area."

"The latest incident underscores Iraq's continued failure to abide by these resolutions and its international obligations," Mr. Boucher said.

U.S. said pressing Israel to drop ban on negotiators from Jerusalem

By Marian M. Shabin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The United States is pressing Israel to lift its ban on the participation of Palestinians from East Jerusalem, in peace negotiations, Palestinian officials in Amman and Tunis said Friday.

"The U.S. has studied the Palestinian request to include Arabs from Jerusalem in the Palestinian negotiating team and appears to be backing this request," said Amman-based Palestine Central Council (PCC) member Saleh Raafat told the Jordan Times.

"Yes, the U.S. administration approves. Yasser Abed Rabbo, the PLO's spokesperson in Tunis, told Reuters on the American backing for the

participation of Jerusalem Arabs in the talks.

While an initial request for approval of such a change in the Palestinian delegation had been ignored when Palestinian spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi approached the U.S. State Department in February, a follow-up visit indicated that there had been a change of heart in Washington.

According to Mr. Abed Rabbo, the enlarged Palestinian negotiating team may include the overall head of the team, Faisal Hussein, advisors Zahira Kamal and Sari Nusseibeh as well as Dr. Ashrawi, all considered to be Jerusalemites.

The New York Times reported Thursday that the U.S. was trying to persuade Israel to

agree to the Jerusalemites' inclusion, and the Jerusalem Post, also Thursday, quoted senior Israeli foreign ministry officials as saying Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was considering the matter.

Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian, in a satellite news conference, told Arab journalists in Amman, Cairo and Damascus that a "significant package of statements, gestures and actions has been elaborated" to entice the Palestinians back to negotiations (see related story).

Mr. Hussein was quoted as saying that he thought Israelis had indicated a willingness to talk to him at the peace table. The Post reported that Mr.

(Continued on page 5)

Peres says deal is 'in the air'

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Friday there was a proposal "in the air" to try to revive deadlocked Middle East peace talks.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials and the New York Times said Thursday that the United States, trying to coax the Palestinians back to the talks, had proposed Israeli admit Faisal Al Hussein, a Palestinian leader from Arab East Jerusalem, to the talks.

"There is no doubt there is a suggestion like that in the air. In practice Faisal Hussein is at the head of the Palestinian team," Mr. Peres told army radio.

"First of all the Palestinians should return to the negotiations and we'll see if that is demanded in order to further the negotiations," he said.

Until now Mr. Hussein has been chief adviser to Palestinians

in the Mideast talks. Mr. Hussein, who has close ties to the PLO and spent 18 months in jail during the Palestinian uprising, is in effect already the chief delegate.

But he has been denied a formal role at the negotiating table by Israel's objections to sitting down with Arabs from Jerusalem.

Mr. Peres stressed on army radio that excluding Arab negotiators from Jerusalem was a policy of the previous right-wing Likud government.

"It's a ridiculous matter, as though if we include someone who lives in Jerusalem, Jerusalem changes," Mr. Peres said.

"What happens for example with Americans who live in Paris. They also can vote in American elections. Does that make Paris an American city?" he asked.

"Mr. Peres added that he has never ruled out Faisal Hussein."

He said that "on the ground, Faisal Hussein heads the Palestinian team... the Americans are speaking with him. We are not deaf or blind."

The Maariv daily reported that the compromise over Mr. Hussein's role was partly negotiated at a secret meeting recently in Jerusalem between Mr. Peres and Mr. Hussein.

It said the Palestinians have delayed indicating their agreement to attend peace talks because PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat objects to enhancing Mr. Hussein's status in the talks.

In Tunis, Yasser Abed-Rabbo, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, said the administration supported a move to admit Mr. Hussein and three other Jerusalem Palestinians to the talks.

Mr. Abed-Rabbo said other

(Continued on page 5)



Franciscan monks pass an Israeli policeman in Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's Old City in a procession marking Good Friday (AFP photo)

Christians mark Good Friday under shadow of occupation

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Christians from around the world walked the Way of Sorrow in the walled Old City on Good Friday, ignoring troubles in the Holy Land to trace Christ's steps towards his crucifixion.

Thousands of pilgrims sang hymns and lugged wooden crosses as they made their way along the narrow street to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where traditions say Jesus was crucified and buried.

This year's ritual comes amid heightened tension. Israel's sealing off of the occupied territories last week to quell violence meant only a few hundred Palestinian Christians with special permits reached Friday's procession.

But many visiting Christians appeared unaware of the conflict, and Jerusalem's Old City was jammed with pilgrims from Nigeria, New Zealand, Russia, the Philippines, the United States and Europe.

Some said they understood the

tensions — having seen armed Israeli soldiers and police — but would not let it deter them.

Small groups of pilgrims and brown-robed monks passed along the Via Dolorosa, (Way of Sorrow), kneeling in prayer at the stations symbolising Christ's suffering. Tourists, some filming with video cameras, watched from the sidelines.

Thousands fell in behind the main procession, led by Palesti-

(Continued on page 5)

Yeltsin sees world shuddering if he fails

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin warned Friday that if he loses the referendum on confidence in his leadership, extremist forces in Russia will assume power and "the entire world will shudder."

If he wins the April 25 balloting and voters also call for new legislative elections, Mr. Yeltsin said he would take that as a sign the legislature had lost its power and he would wield his presidential authority to fill the vacuum.

Intensifying his campaign with little more than two weeks left before the vote, Mr. Yeltsin invited the country's top news executives to the Kremlin and told

them the referendum "is the fate of Russia, and you all realise this full well."

The balloting is shaping up as the climax to the power struggle between Mr. Yeltsin and the communist-dominated Congress of Peoples' deputies, Russia's highest parliamentary body.

"If there is no president, the power will be assumed by the most extremist forces, and the entire world will shudder," Mr. Yeltsin said. Portions of his meeting were broadcast on Russian Television.

His main rival for power, Legislative Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, told Russia's regional legis-

lators earlier Friday that while the referendum is important, it will not solve the country's main problem — the economy.

"The most probable outcome of (the referendum) is the early elections of both the president and the legislators," he was quoted as saying.

Hardliners in the congress added more questions to the referendum, including one on his painful economic reforms that may prove embarrassing to the president. Besides the questions on his leadership and economic reform, the questions also ask whether there should be new presidential and legislative elec-

tions.

If voters say they trust his leadership and also call for new elections for lawmakers, then the legislature "loses its power and the president acts in accordance with the presidential power system," Mr. Yeltsin told the journalists.

Mr. Khasbulatov's deputy, Nikolai Ryabov, said Friday that if voters approve new elections for legislators, that should not be interpreted as a decision to dissolve the congress.

The congress also set up rules for the referendum that make it harder for Mr. Yeltsin to win the vote.

Expellees demand U.S. clarify package

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (R) — Palestinian expellees demanded Friday the United States clarify proposals on offer to persuade Palestinians to resume Middle East peace talks.

"There are American pressures on the Arab states aimed at resuming the negotiations but we frankly say that things can't be in code; they should be clear," said Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396 men stranded in South Lebanon for 114 days.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian said Thursday he could not give details of negotiations to persuade Palestinians to attend the Washington talks.

But he added: "The point is

that a very significant package of statements, gestures and actions has been elaborated which could and will come into play as soon as the Palestinians make a positive decision to come to the round on April 20" (see story below).

Dr. Rantisi told reporters at the expellees' tent camp that "America should not blackmail the Palestinians and Arabs" but should force Israel to reverse the expulsions.

He demanded implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which was issued one day after the Palestinians were banished and demands Israel takes them back immediately.

Palestinians have been pressing

for Washington and Israel to make commitments on the substance of the talks, expulsions of Palestinians, and Israeli practices in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip before agreeing to resume the peace process.

The other Arab peace partners — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — have delayed a decision whether to attend the negotiations.

Foreign ministers of the four sides meet in Syria next week to decide whether to attend the talks.

Dr. Rantisi said Arabs would be put in a weak position that would allow Israel to sidestep other U.N. Security Council resolutions if they resumed talks before 799 was implemented.

Libya may send pilgrims to Jerusalem

CAIRO (AP) — Libya said Friday it might send pilgrims to Islamic holy sites in occupied Jerusalem because U.N. sanctions won't let them take the pilgrimages to Mecca that Islam requires of all Muslims.

In discussing the prospect, Tripoli's official news agency did not mention Israel, which considers Jerusalem its "capital" and would have to issue visas for pilgrimages.

It referred to Israelis as nothing more than occupiers of the Holy City. If they reject the Libyans, JANA's local affairs editor wrote, "it will be another reason to emphasise the necessity of freeing Jerusalem and Palestine."

"Libyan Muslim Arabs have been forcefully prevented from performing Hajj in Mecca. It is therefore their right to think about changing the site of their Hajj to Jerusalem," said JANA, monitored in Cairo.

"This issue concerns the Arab Muslim Libyans and their religious practices. It has nothing to do with the Israelis, who are an occupying force."

Libya has been cut off from the world since the United Nations enforced arms, air and diplomatic sanctions on April 15, 1992, a year ago next Thursday.

The sanctions exempt religious pilgrimages, on approval by an enforcement committee. But Libya has rallied often against the requirement to obtain permission from the United States and other countries, it considers Christian

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Algeria seizes Israeli arms from militants

ALGIERS (R) — Islamic militants in Algeria have been caught with Israeli-made Uzis and other sophisticated weapons that indicate a shift to more urban attacks, official sources said.

"The appearance of Uzi pistols among terrorists confirms they have adopted a plan to go underground and wage terrorism in towns after rural areas were cleared of terrorist groups," the official APS news agency quoted the gendarmier as saying on Thursday.

The agency said authorities also have confiscated Yugoslavian-made weapons from the militants, who are blamed for unrest that has killed at least 600 people in the past year.

It said that in the last three months nine pistols were recovered from slain militants. It said four of the weapons were Uzis and five were Scorpion pistols made in Yugoslavia.

APS said later that security forces shot dead a wanted man and wounded two accomplices in a shootout on Thursday at Boumerdes.

"The terrorist group, in a Zastava vehicle, turned back at the sight of a gendarmier roadblock, was pursued ... and an exchange of gunfire followed," the agency said, quoting gendarmier headquarters.

It said the man killed, Abdul Aziz Senadji, 28, was wanted for killing two members of the security forces last December, theft of shotguns and three holdups. It did not say whether the wounded men were arrested.

The same day in Blida, 50 kilometres south of Algiers, three men with sawn-off shotguns killed a 34-year-old trader and fled, the agency said.

Djerejian reports compromise of 'statements, gestures and actions'

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior State Department official has confirmed that a compromise has been reached to break the stalemate in the Middle East peace process and voiced confidence that all parties would return to the next round of talks in Washington on April 20.

"A very significant package of statements, gestures, and actions has been elaborated which could come and will come into play as soon as the Palestinians make a positive decision to come to the round on April 20, and that is the key," said Edward Djerejian, assistant secretary of state for the Middle East affairs.

Mr. Djerejian, speaking in a satellite interview with jour-

nalists based in Cairo, Damascus and Amman Thursday, would not go into details, saying "they reflect the very substance of our diplomatic changes with the parties, specifically with the Palestinians, the Israelis, and others."

According to Palestinian sources in Amman who spoke to the Jordan Times Wednesday, the "package" involves American and Israeli declaration of certain commitments to be issued immediately after the Palestinians announce a decision to go back to the negotiating table on April 20.

The sources said the Israeli commitment would include an undertaking not to resort to expulsion of Palestinians and to improve the Jewish state's human rights record in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and a reaffirmation that

the basis for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement would be U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

On its part, Washington will, according to the source, issue a statement restating its commitment to and role in the peace process in implementation of 242 and 338 as well as undertaking unspecified actions to consolidate a six-point agreement reached between the Palestinians and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during the secretary's visit to the Middle East in February.

The peace talks were stalled after Israel expelled over 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon in December and refused to abide by a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for their immediate repatriation.

The Palestinian negotiating

team refused to return to the talks until the expellees are repatriated, while Israel, coming under international pressure, only offered to take 101 of them back immediately and the rest before the end of the year.

The Palestinian acceptance of the "package" — which also includes a provision for an "accelerated phased return" of the expellees stranded in Lebanon — is expected to be announced at an Arab coordination meeting in December on April 16.

"We are certain that the parties will be at the table on April 20," Mr. Djerejian said.

Following our contacts with (Egyptian President Hosni) Mubarak, (Palestinian negotiating team leader) Faisal Hussein, and from our ongoing contacts with the

other parties, we feel confident that the talks will resume on April 20."

Mr. Djerejian — a senior "hold-over" from the Bush administration who is closely involved in the Middle East peace process that was launched in Madrid in October 1991 — said the Clinton administration was giving "one of the highest priorities" to Arab-Israeli peace and hence the visit of Mr. Christopher to the region in February in his first foreign trip after assuming office.

"That must tell you that President Clinton has attached the utmost importance to achieving an Arab-Israeli peace settlement," Mr. Djerejian said. "He (Clinton) firmly believes that there is an historic opportunity here that must not be missed, and he is will-

ing, despite all... other pressing priorities on American foreign policy interests, he is willing to devote his energies and certainly the energies of Secretary of State Christopher to moving this process forward."

Throughout his comments in reply to questions, Mr. Djerejian underlined several themes: Significant progress could be made in the peace process in 1993 and time should not be wasted; the Palestinians should return to the negotiating table on April 20; all parties should forward "meaningful positions on the substantive issues — land, peace and security" — and Washington would play the role of a "full partner" but not exercise any pressure on Israel.

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Unemployment rampant in Iraq as result of sanctions, minister says

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq, once the biggest Arab employer of foreign workers, now suffers from rampant unemployment as a result of the sweeping international sanctions imposed against it in 1990, according to a senior Iraqi official.

Labour Minister Omeid Midhat Mubarak also said Iraq, which was largely self-dependent on consumer products, was suffering from almost-total crippling of its industries in the absence of raw materials and spare parts denied to it under the sanctions.

Dr. Mubarak, who is also health minister of the beleaguered country which has found itself diplomatically isolated in the wake of the Gulf crisis, said Iraq remained open to "dialogue that would guarantee the interests of all parties provided that it would not undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and would not interfere with internal Iraqi affairs."

The minister, speaking to reporters on the fringes of an Arab labour conference now under way in Amman, said unemployment among the 18 million Iraqi people was an issue of major concern to the Baghdad government.

"For the first time in Iraq's history, we are suffering from rampant unemployment as a result of the sanctions," he said, noting that his country was once the largest employer of foreign workers in the Arab World.

The minister could not provide precise figures on the total work force of Iraq or on unemployment. "The figures

varied from month to month and year to year, depending on the military situation," he said, referring to the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and the 1991 war over Kuwait and the armed forces' swift recruitment and demobilisation campaigns.

Dr. Mubarak said Iraq employed more than three million foreign workers, the bulk of them Arabs, prior to the Gulf crisis sparked by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Now, he said, around 400,000 guest workers remained in the country.

Among them are Egyptians, Sudanese, Yemenis, Indians and Pakistanis as well as Jordanians and Palestinians, he said.

But major industries remain crippled and there is very little Iraq could do in this respect as long as the sanctions remain, he noted.

"The scarcity of raw materials and spare parts resulting from the international sanctions and other devastating effects of the war has forced the closure of the bulk of Iraqi public sector and private sector industries," he said.

Thousands of Iraqi factories have been closed down and those which are operating are doing so with a minimum level of employees since they lack raw material, he added.

Dr. Mubarak denied that Iraq was witnessing a high rate of crime resulting from unemployment and said that, if anything, the level of crimes in his country was much less than many others "which have not gone to war or found themselves under crippling sanctions."

According to the minister, the Iraqi people have "ad-



Omeid Midhat Mubarak justified himself to the situation and rationalised their consumption. He noted that the government was subsidising a good part of the people's food needs and "this has alleviated the social burden on the Iraqi individual."

Dr. Mubarak said despite the absence of advanced equipment and expertise, the Iraqis had managed to push their quest for development. He cited as examples the building of the "Saddam River," a confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, and plans to launch the "fifth and fourth river projects." He did not give details of the projects.

The minister, however, conceded that Iraq was finding it difficult to rebuild many of the sites that were destroyed in the war. "We do not have spare parts and equipment," he said.

He said Iraq was hoping that the Amman conference would come out with a call,

among other things, for an immediate end to the international sanctions.

According to the minister, the "positive atmosphere of the conference is dramatically opposed to the situation that we witnessed at earlier Arab gatherings," and that the "minimum we could ask for is a demand that the sanctions against Iraq be removed and Iraqi assets frozen abroad be unfrozen."

He attributed the "positive atmosphere" to the "wise leadership of His Majesty King Hussein and the dynamic understanding of Labour Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti," the Jordanian chairman of the conference.

According to the minister, the very fact that the conference is being held in Jordan with mostly ministerial-level participation from the Arab League members is "an indication of the awareness of the Arabs of the plots against the Arab Nation and the conspiracies inherent in the efforts to establish a new world order dominated by one world power."

Dr. Mubarak said he had exchanged greetings and held technical consultations with all delegates to the conference except the Kuwaitis, who are represented by the under-secretary of the Ministry of Labour.

The Iraqi minister criticised what he described as "the double-standard of the United Nations" in dealing with the Middle East.

"We are sure that the sanctions against Iraq will not be lifted through the initiative of one country or another," he said. "But, we the Iraqis, will quash the impact of the sanctions through our own efforts."



A Somali woman makes an insulting gesture at Belgian soldiers during a demonstration Thursday in the southern port city of Kismayu (AFP photo)

Kismayu hinders Somali peace bid

By Sue Fleming
Reuters

KISMAYU, Somalia — The southern port of Kismayu, torn by clan fighting, is likely to be the U.N.'s biggest challenge in Somalia when it takes charge next month.

"Kismayu is going to be a continual problem. This is a dispute which will take a lot of work in trying to find a solution," said retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, the U.N.'s special envoy in Somalia.

Adm. Howe made his first visit to the Kismayu region Thursday and was bombarded with complaints that Belgian troops, part of a U.S.-led multinational force, and the U.N. were taking sides in a bitter clan dispute.

"We are not your enemy. We are your friends and we are trying very hard to find a peaceful solution here," Adm. Howe told supporters of warlord Omar Jess, whose militia is fighting forces loyal to Mohammed Said Hersi, also known as General Morgan.

The 900 Belgian troops based in Kismayu say both factions have been using women and children as human shields during clashes, making intervention difficult.

"Don't you realise what a tough time we are having stopping this fighting. Do you want us to open fire on women and children?" a Belgian officer asked a Jess supporter Thursday who accused foreign troops of siding with Gen. Morgan.

The U.S.-led multinational

force arrived in Somalia last December to restore order and end the looting of food convoys intended for the starving. The United States is due to hand over command to the United Nations next month.

While a semblance of normality has returned to most areas, Kismayu remains a stumbling block to peace.

When the Belgians arrived in the southern port, Colonel Jess was the dominant warlord. But within two months, Gen. Morgan had won the fight for supremacy.

Gen. Morgan is the son-in-law of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre, whose ouster in January, 1991 touched off Somalia's civil war.

they came under attack from Gen. Morgan's militia.

The evacuees are now in small villages north of Kismayu. Makeshift hospitals have been set up to treat those wounded in the fighting.

The U.N. has sent extra medicine and food for the evacuees, who are bitter about leaving their homes. At Baar, where many of the evacuees were taken, doctors said seven wounded people had died in the past two days.

"Many of the injured are malnourished and we do not have enough medicines, all these people just want to go back to their homes," a doctor, who travelled with the evacuees, told Adm. Howe.

But Gen. Keymeulen said it would be impossible to send the evacuees back unless the security situation improved.

"If we were to take them back to Kismayu now, there would be war. These people know they would be killed," he said.

"I can understand that these people are upset. Their homes have been taken from them and they are poor. But I don't think the solution is a military one, it has to come from the politicians."

The U.N. has sent its top political advisers to Kismayu to try and broker a solution, but so far the visits have been fruitless.

"From what I have seen today, we have real problems. I don't think these people are ready yet for peace," a U.N. official said after visiting the Kismayu region.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Jess supporters accuse the U.N. and the U.S.-led forces of trying to bring Mr. Siad Barre back into Somalia by supporting Gen. Morgan.

Belgian Brigadier-General Ramond Keymeulen, who denied supporting either side, told Reuters that Col. Jess' ragtag militia was trying to launch a last-minute push on the port before rains arrived.

"I think they might try to retake parts of the city before the rains come and communication and transport become difficult. But they are poorly armed and I do not think they will have much success," Gen. Keymeulen said.

Belgian troops evacuated about 1,000 Jess supporters last week from Kismayu after

Turkish sentry kills Greek-Cypriot soldier

NICOSIA (R) — A Turkish soldier shot dead a Greek-Cypriot soldier Thursday on the line dividing the Cypriot capital Nicosia, Defence Minister Costas Eliades said.

The soldier, 20, had entered the buffer zone unarmed, carrying two bottles of Cyprus brandy in a plastic bag, he said.

The buffer zone is patrolled by U.N. peacekeeping forces and out of bounds to Cypriot or Turkish soldiers.

The minister said the shooting took place at 6:37 p.m. (1537 GMT) in the Kaiamukli area in the east of the city and U.N. forces helped move his body to hospital at 8 p.m. (1700 GMT).

"Inquiries on the spot show so far that the soldier, Athanasios Kleovoulou, was murdered in cold blood while unarmed in the buffer zone carrying two bottles of Cypriot brandy in a plastic bag," Mr. Eliades said in remarks broadcast live on the private television station Logos.

The sentry post from which the Turkish soldier fired was not permanently manned, he added.

State-run Cyprus Television earlier said Turkish troops prevented anyone approaching the body but did not explain how. A doctor said the soldier probably lived 20 minutes.

The last fatal shooting on the green line dividing Cyprus was in May 1989, when a Greek-Cypriot guard shot dead a Turkish-Cypriot soldier.

Doctor Costas Antoniou said a bullet hit Kleovoulou in the liver and a kidney. The guardsman might have survived if he had reached hospital earlier, he added.

Mr. Eliades said the government had made representations to the U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus and was awaiting a final report from inquiries by the U.N. force and the national guard.

Cyprus has been divided since Turkish troops invaded the north in response to a short-lived Greek nationalist coup in 1974 but the U.N. force has largely kept the peace.

The United Nations made some progress towards a political settlement last year but the newly elected Greek-Cypriot president, Glafcos Clerides, has reservations about proposals by secretary-general Boutros Ghali.

Rauf Denktaş, the leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community and president of the self-styled Turkish republic of north Cyprus, is also under pressure from Turkish-Cypriots opposed to a settlement.

The government said Friday the killing of the soldier was an unprovoked murder which damaged efforts to reunite the island.

"The government categorically condemns the unprovoked murder of soldier Athanasios Kleovoulou," government spokesman Yiannakis Casoulides told reporters.

"It directly harms the climate for efforts to find a settlement in Cyprus and responsibility for this lies squarely on the Turkish occupation force," he said.

Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş, speaking on the northern side of the capital, expressed sorrow over the killing.

"This should not have happened," he said.

Sudan rebels to hold talks with government

NAIROBI (R) — The Sudanese government and a rebel faction opposed to guerrilla leader John Garang will open separate peace talks in Nairobi next week, a rebel spokesman said Friday.

"We shall hold our own talks and Garang can hold his. There should be no problem of the talks taking place side by side," spokesman John Luk told Reuters.

The Nasir, Yyoon and Kwanyin factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) announced Monday they were joining forces in a new front.

Efforts by African leaders to unite them with Colonel Garang had failed," Mr. Luk said.

"After the frustration of its efforts for unity by John Garang and in view of the immense suffering of the people of southern Sudan, we have resolved to enter into serious negotiations with the Sudan government," he said.

"These talks will go ahead with or without John Garang."

The faction was seeking Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi's help so the talks could begin next week, Mr. Luk said.

They will not prejudice separate Nigerian-brokered talks between Col. Garang and the fundamentalist government in Khartoum on April 26, he said.

Col. Garang heads the mainstream SPLA, fighting since 1983 to end what it sees as domination of a largely Christian and animist southern population by the Muslim, Arabised northern government.

In August 1991, top Garang aides including Riak Machar and Lam Akol defected from the SPLA, accusing Col. Garang of human rights violations, to form

what became known as the Nasir faction.

On Monday Mr. Machar was named as head of the new front.

Mr. Luk said Col. Garang had spurned calls for unity from African leaders.

"Since Garang has ruled out any chance for the unification of the movement and continues to instigate inter-SPLA fighting, we call upon all SPLA officers still with him to abandon him," Mr. Luk said.

Col. Garang accuses the newly united faction of secretly collaborating with the fundamentalist government to undermine him. On Thursday his faction said government forces had violated a two-week-old ceasefire by arming his rivals.

Political analysts in Nairobi doubted the success of the Kenya talks, saying there could be no solution to the conflict without the participation of the Garang group, by far the biggest and best armed faction.

Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ali Bashir said Wednesday he was trying to speed peace talks with southern rebels but an end to the country's devastating civil war would be up to them.

"A peace agreement depends on the other side," Lieutenant-General Bashir told foreign reporters when asked about prospects for a settlement.

A government delegation headed by Economic Planning and Investment Minister Ali Haj Mohamamd is in the Nigerian capital Abuja for talks with Gen. Bashir, he hoped all the various factions of the SPLA would also go to Abuja.

U.S. art dealer accused of providing information to Jewish group

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A local anti-discrimination group allegedly hired an art dealer to gather information on anti-semitic, anti-apartheid and other groups for more than two decades, according to a newspaper.

Quoting court documents, the San Francisco Examiner said the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith paid San Francisco art dealer Roy Bullock hundreds of thousands of dollars to gather information on some 500 American ethnic and political groups.

Mr. Bullock over 25 years hired informants in those groups with "extreme anti-Semitic philosophies" but that he did nothing improper.

"If he was able to infiltrate these hate groups... and share information with law enforcement, which he did, he's performing a service. He shouldn't be looked on as if he's a criminal,"

Mr. Breakstone said. Investigators suspect former San Francisco police officer Tom Gerhardt and Mr. Bullock of illegally gathering confidential information on some 12,000 individuals and groups. They allegedly include anti-apartheid, pro-Arab, anti-Jewish and white supremacist groups in the Bay area and southern California.

The groups, in computerised records Mr. Gerhardt and Mr. Bullock allegedly compiled, were categorised as "pinko," "right," "Arab," "skins" and "ANC."

The Examiner said. The last two categories refer to "skinhead" groups and the African National Congress, the dominant black political organisation in South Africa.

The groups allegedly targeted included such activist group as Al Fateh and the American Indian Movement, the Examiner

said, but others included lower-profile groups such as Earth Island Institute and the Bay Guardian newspaper, a local weekly with a liberal political orientation.

Mr. Bullock, 58, also has worked closely with law enforcement agencies, according to the documents and his lawyer.

The hundreds of pages of documents were filed in a police and district attorney's investigation centering on Mr. Gerhardt, according to the affidavit.

Mr. Gerhardt, 50, took early retirement after 22 years with the San Francisco police department, then moved to the Philippines in November.

Mr. Gerhardt, however, told the Examiner from the Philippines that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was out to destroy him even though he said he and Mr. Bullock had been longtime

bureau informants. Between 1985 and 1993 alone, Mr. Bullock received nearly \$170,000 in payments, according to the documents.

The ADL, which has cooperated in the probe, declined to comment.

The ADL previously has admitted gathering information on a wide range of individuals and groups. But it insists its practices are legal and consistent with its goal of fighting prejudice against all groups.

The FBI began the investigation in 1990 but turned it over to city attorneys last fall. The Examiner, citing a source close to the investigation, said the FBI was afraid it would have to divulge government secrets in any federal proceedings.

The FBI has declined to comment on Mr. Gerhardt's allegation that it was out to destroy him.

Libya wants to switch pilgrimage

(Continued from page 1)

to make Islam's most sacred journey. The punishment is meant to force Tripoli to hand over for trial in the United States or Britain two Libyans charged with the December 1988 destruction of

Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

JANA suggested that in addition to substituting Jerusalem for Mecca on Haj, Libyans might consider changing the direction of their prayers, from Mecca to Jerusalem.

"There is no difference now

between Mecca and Jerusalem. Both have prevented Libyans from reaching them," JANA said.

JANA did not say how the Libyan pilgrims would reach Israel or if they have asked for visas. The main Muslim shrines are in Arab East Jerusalem under

Israeli occupation.

Israel's Davar newspaper, close to the ruling Labour Party, reported Wednesday that Libya asked for visas for about 200 high-ranking Muslims through Jewish leaders and businessmen. It said the Clinton administration indicated it wanted Israel to delay the visas.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO	TIME
LES Aventures de L'Espace	18:30
Envoyé Spécial	19:00
News in French	19:15
Envoyé Spécial	19:30
News in Hebrew	20:00
News in Arabic	20:30
Super Blowers	21:00
Local Programme	21:30
Saturday Variety Show	22:00
News in English	22:30
Feature Film "Hand of Mander"	23:30

PRAYER TIMES

TIME	PRAYER
06:49	Fajr
09:19	Dhuhr (Summer)
12:37	Dhuhr
19:05	Asr
20:25	Maghrib
20:19	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740	Min./Max. temp.
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	Amman 7/17
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624900	Aqaba 12/26
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	Desert 5/20
	Jordan Valley 6/11, 23

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terramata Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 638551, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 324326

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623904, 654032

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675491

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will become partly cloudy in the afternoon and a drop in temperatures will take place. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN: Dr. Ahmad Yousef 786384

Dr. Mohammad Imran 612232

Dr. Waleed Karam 985446

Dr. Abbas Hakem 985446

Fine pharmacy 786336

Ferdous pharmacy 637655

Naioukh pharmacy 636672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmechani pharmacy 637660

Najm pharmacy 847632

Dr. Hisham Shurabati 985417

Khalid pharmacy 985417

Dr. Hisham Shurabati 985417

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Dr. Hisham Shurabati 985417

Khalid pharmacy 985417

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816

Al-Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmechani 664171/4

Shmechani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Mushtaq Hospital 667277/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666127

Home News

King returns to Alma Mater to address graduating cadets

AMMAN (J.T.) — Forty years after graduating from England's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as an Officer Cadet, His Majesty King Hussein returned to his Alma Mater Thursday on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the 111th Sovereign's Parade.

King Hussein was received upon arrival by the parade with a royal salute.

After inspecting the parade, the King addressed the cadets, recalling his days at Sandhurst 40 years ago.

"It is indeed a long time since the 5th of February 1953 when I took my place on parade on these very grounds to graduate as an Officer from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst," His Majesty said.

"In the four eventful decades since, I have always felt that my experience at Sandhurst was one which had the greatest impact on my formative years. I am sure



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lieutenant General Abdul Hafez Miral Al Kaabneh received at Army General Headquarters Thursday Jordan's Major General Rashida Taba, chief of staff of the

Meeting urges promoting Arab women in industry

By a Jordan Times Staff reporter

AMMAN — A four-day symposium on women in modern Arab industries ended here Friday with a final statement recommending among other things, the eradication of illiteracy among women and provision for their vocational training to help them contribute further to Arab industry.

The statement appealed to the media to spread awareness among the Arab societies on the importance of women's participation in industrial production and on the elimination of barriers and discrimination between men and women in employment and wages.

Stressing the need for training women in the fields of advanced industrial and technological fields, the statement said that this essential work should be done by the decision-makers of the executive and legislative authorities.

Furthermore, the statement urged women in the Arab World to set up industrial projects of their own and called for concerned authorities such as trade unions and ministries of industry to provide them with guaranteed loans and other facilities.

It called on Arab women's unions to organise visits to factories employing women in order to study their working conditions.

Arab countries were urged, through the statement, to revise their respective civil service codes on employment of women.

On Thursday, the delegates, who represented eight Arab countries, discussed a set of working papers dealing with the employment of women in electronic industries, vocational training problems, and difficulties involving working women.

The meeting was organised by the Arab Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, the General Federation of Arab Women, the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HICST) in Jordan.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- EXHIBITIONS**
- ★ Art exhibition by Nawaf Al Bukhari at the Phoenix Art Gallery.
 - ★ Art exhibition entitled "The Legend of Petra II" by artist Suha Shoman at the National Gallery for Fine Arts.
 - ★ Exhibition entitled "Re-creation" by Jordanian, French and Iraqi artists, inspired by a sculpture by Iraqi artist Mohammad Hussein Abdullah, at the French Cultural Centre.
 - ★ Exhibition of a children's drawings at the British Council.
- SEMINAR**
- ★ Seminar, in Arabic, marking the 20th anniversary of the death of Kamal Nasser, Kamal Edwan and Youssef Al Najjar at the Scientific and Cultural Centre of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6.30 p.m.
- CONCERT**
- ★ Piano and clarinet concert organised by the National Music Conservatory at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8 p.m.
- FILM**
- ★ French film entitled "Le Petit Soldat" at the Zarqa Chamber of Commerce at 7 p.m.

Effects of sanctions increase toll on Iraqis

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Health services in Iraq have steadily deteriorated since the imposition of international sanctions against the country in 1990, and Iraqis are witnessing a reemergence of preventable diseases which had been eradicated before the Gulf crisis, according to a senior Iraqi official.

The sanctions, imposed as a punitive measure following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, have also forced Iraqi hospitals to close and to admit only emergency cases, Health Minister Omeid Midhat Mubarak said.

The minister, speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an Arab labour conference in Amman, said Iraq was not producing 12 per cent of its medicinal needs, and international assistance to the country's 18 million people was minimal.

"The sanctions have caused acute shortages of medicine and equipment," Dr. Mubarak said. "We can only provide a fraction of the health services that the Iraqi people need."

He said that only between 30 and 50 per cent of hospital beds were being used, and that too was for emergency cases, and non-emergency "cold cases" were being deferred, "leading to further complications and side-effects."

"We are in a vicious circle," he said. "Lack of vaccines, laboratory equipment, and the general state of sewerage and fresh water supplies badly affected by the war have limited our abilities to fight and prevent the spread of contagious diseases."

Surgeries have gone down by 80 per cent and only 82 per cent of cases that need close study and investigations are being attended to, he said.

"We don't have anaesthetics and as such we cannot perform many operations," the minister said.

Dr. Mubarak noted that Iraq imported medicine and related supplies worth \$600 million to \$700 million every year prior to the crisis sparked by its invasion of Kuwait.

"No single (relief) organisation can meet the needs of the Iraqi people," said the minister, describing relief offered by various international institutions, non-governmental organisations and the United Nations as a "drop in the ocean."

Dr. Mubarak said the sanctions, which ban all Iraqi exports — the country's mainstay revenue — were preventing the government from raising funds for imports of food and medicine.

"We are seeing a six- to 12-fold increase in the number of cases of

Social changes bring increased crime, says expert

By Samsan Ghosheh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The types of crimes in Jordan have changed because of social transformations, and include increasing family violence, thefts of material goods and incidents of severe assaults on individuals, according to professor of sociology, Sabri Rubeihat, in a lecture Wednesday.

"Social changes and problems," Dr. Rubeihat said, "are the subjects least discussed in Jordan, despite their importance to our lives."

Dr. Rubeihat defined social transformation as "a change in the relationships and structure of society."

Change is the only constant phenomenon, he said. In this century, Jordan witnessed the fastest rate of change ever; passing through three different phases, Dr. Rubeihat said.

Prior to 1950 and the establishment of Jordan as an independent state, tribes were the only institution in society, and individuals were totally dependent on them.

As a result of 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the consequent integration of the Palestinian and Jordanian people, a merger of "urbanized people with bedouins," brought with it more developed institutions and cultural centres, Dr. Rubeihat explained.

He added that the high rate of urbanization and population growth has affected social relations as well as the people's ideas and goals in life.

In 1985, Jordan suffered from a faster rate of transformation as a result of the increasing economic problems and the beginning of the democratisation process, Dr. Rubeihat said.

These factors, accompanied by the lack of resources in Jordan, has led to the appearance of several social deviations, he said. Dr. Rubeihat defined social deviation as departing from social norms and values.

He said, although, the percentage of reported rapes has declined, the percentage of other major assaults has increased considerably.

Dr. Rubeihat estimated that 80 "gruesome" murders have occurred in Jordan this year. In addition, he maintained that the increase in material goods have

resulted in the increase of thefts.

"Before, people's belongings were few, but with the development of technology there are more popular electronic goods that could be stolen," he explained.

The growth of cities has created new neighbourhoods inhabited by strangers with no social ties, neither familial nor communal, Dr. Rubeihat said. "Homes in these neighbourhoods can be easily burglarised," he added, a significant factor in the increase in the number of thefts.

"The constraints of life and the augmenting problems of people have escalated violence in the society," Dr. Rubeihat said.

Victims of violence, he stated, are usually people who are least capable of defending themselves, such as the elderly, children and women.

Since most of the elderly do not generate income, they seem to have lost their former respected position in society, Dr. Rubeihat said, and have become easy victims of violence.

"Parents feel that they can do what they want with their children," Dr. Rubeihat said. Children, he explained, are constantly seen as a form of disturbance, especially in crowded apartments. Thus they are often beaten or sexually abused, he said.

"An abused and neglected child will never be creative and have an effective role in society," he maintained.

The abused child, according to Dr. Rubeihat, will develop patterns of lying and cheating as a "strategy for survival."

Dr. Rubeihat said that by studying police reports for 18 months, he was able to find 295 cases of sexual abuse of children.

But he emphasised that this is only a small portion — the portion that is reported — and in a traditional society like Jordan's, cases like these are not usually reported.

Dr. Rubeihat also mentioned a survey done by a professor at the University of Jordan regarding family violence.

He said 87 per cent of the students who participated in the survey revealed either child or spouse abuse.

Drugs are increasingly becoming a problem in Jordan, Dr. Rubeihat affirmed.

"Some students studying abroad return with this problem," he said. In addition, Jordan is affected by the presence of drugs in neighbouring countries, some who consume and others who produce, he maintained.

In response to an attendee's question, Dr. Rubeihat stressed the need to modify laws in Jordan. "Laws have not been modified to meet social transformation. We do not have laws that protect children. We need laws that protect individuals from other individuals. We need laws that protect us from family abuse, to protect us from our fathers, brothers and husbands."

Dr. Rubeihat believes that "the society needs to be reoriented into small self-sufficient social districts, each district should have its own institutions... centralization has not worked. People need to stop depending totally on the government and start acting for themselves."

Dr. Rubeihat's lecture on social transformations and problems of deviation in the Jordanian society was hosted by the Abdel Hameed Shoman Foundation.

Group recommends specifics on human rights universality, inter-relationship and indivisibility

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Minor difficulties but a major success" was the description of the organisers of the human rights round table, held in Amman last week.

"Different participants representing diverse cultures and faiths from all regions came to a consensus in three days," said Julia Hausermann, chair of the International Board of Rights and Humanity Movement which organised the conference.

"This proves that there really is a universality: The main objective of the conference."

The three-day round table, which ended Wednesday after drafting a list of recommendations to be submitted to the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in Vienna in June, insisted upon the principle of universality of human rights, their inter-relationship and indivisibility.

Despite financial difficulties in its preparatory stages that impeded a normal proceeding of the conference's preliminary preparations, 32 experts finally succeeded in making their way to Amman for the meeting.

"Though they were only given two-weeks notice, most of those who were invited have come and participated in this event," said Ms. Hausermann, a Geneva-based attorney, adding that the reason behind the absence of invitee Simone Veil (President of the European Parliament), for example, was because she was recently appointed as France's Minister of Social and Health Affairs in the new government.

Another invited specialist, Rabbi Lionel Blue of the United Kingdom, was absent due to illness.

In his place, his representative, Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, principal at Leo Baeck College in London, attended and presented what many participants described as one of the most significant perspectives regarding the differences between Islam and Judaism.

"He tried to establish a new vision that encompasses common values we all share and seek to accomplish," said Ms. Hausermann. "As was being stressed by all other participants, a new perspective regarding the understanding of each other's opinions and differences, and our responsibilities to future generations were highlighted in Mr. Magonet's speech," she added.

The significance of the conference, for many participants, was its ability to group experts representing different faiths — Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism — reflecting diverse understanding and attitudes of indigenous peoples, children and women, and coming from various geographical regions in an equitable manner.

Equitable participation of males and females of different age groups reflected the homogenous atmosphere of the conference.

The 32 experts came from Jordan, Senegal, India, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Ireland, Tibet, Canada, Argentina, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Taiwan, the Republic of Korea and Sudan.

While some human rights activists in Jordan said that a Jordanian approach to human rights in the country has to be fully studied and researched before an international dimension, such as last week's round table, takes place, organisers indicated that the objective of the meeting was not aimed at discussing human rights violations, but to work out a formula to strengthen the commitment to the universality of human rights issues and ensure its application.

"There were many issues that had to be addressed such as women's concerns for example," said Sarah Foulds of the Human Rights Policy Office in the United Kingdom.

"However, we came with a former knowledge of human rights violations and we were using them in our heads without discussing them," added the British attorney.

According to Ms. Hausermann, wide participation by all parties and meetings at high

levels have to be reached to achieve progress in human rights status.

"It is a slow and continuous process," she said. "We have no guarantee that it will happen (that governments abide by human rights standards and regulations), but we hope it will."

The final draft of recommendations, to be submitted to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, emphasised the principle of the universality of human rights whereby every person is seen as unique and all people live in an inter-dependent world.

The discussions were set in the context of the need to address the economic inequalities between and within states.

Specific recommendations on universality, considered by participants and organisers as the major achievement of the meeting, follow:

The world conference recommends that the principle of the universality of human rights be understood to include that:

- All people, including the marginalised, excluded and disadvantaged, are bearers of human rights.
- The principle of universality requires recognition that indigenous peoples are members of the human family in every sense.
- International human rights codes should reflect the totality of the human experience.
- The universality of human rights requires respect for the diversity of faiths and cultures.
- Human rights are inter-related and indivisible and their universality requires that equal importance be given to economic, social and cultural rights on the one hand, and civil and political rights on the other, as expressed in the U.N. covenants.
- The universality of human rights requires that every state throughout the world recognise, protect, respect and promote internationally recognised human rights standards, whatever the state's level of economic or political development, whilst not imposing on states any specific political, legal, social or cultural model.

Meeting focuses on human resources

AMMAN (J.T.) — Human resources development will be reviewed at a three-day symposium to open today in Amman under the Patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

Organised by the Amman-based Arab Thought Forum (ATF) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the meeting is expected to discuss manpower development in the Arab World, a pan-Arab strategy for human resources development, according to a statement by the ATF.


It said that the question of trade among Arab states and the presence of Arab goods in international markets will be discussed by the participants representing a group of Arab officials and decision-makers, the UNDP, the Arab League and Arab regional and Islamic, as well as international organisations.

A report on inter-Arab trade prepared by the UNDP will also be reviewed, the ATF statement said.

The report deals with trade facilities, development of the private sectors, trade policies of Arab states and integration in pan-Arab trade.

Also opening Saturday in Amman is the 11th Cultural Season organised by the Jordan Academy of Arabic with the participation of intellectuals and writers from Arab and Islamic countries.

The cultural season will offer discussions on a wide range of topics related to the Arabic language.



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Fax 03-83804

ARAB BANK
GENERAL MANAGEMENT
SHMEISANI - AMMAN
P.O. BOX 950544-5, TELEPHONE: 660115, 660131
TELEX: 23091 ARABNK JO, FAX: 606793

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

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Space for more

NEWS REPORTS emerging from Washington and Tunis asserting that the peace talks would be held on schedule in Washington on April 26 are good news. The recent flurry of diplomatic activities in Washington involving senior American officials and their Egyptian and Palestinian counterparts appear at last to have paid off. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian, in a satellite interview with Arab journalists Thursday, did not provide all the details of the deal that has apparently reached; but his assertion that "a significant package of statement, gestures and actions has been elaborated" would help the talks to resume on schedule is most encouraging. If reports are true that the U.S. is pressuring Israel to put Jerusalem indirectly on the agenda of the bilateral talks through the inclusion of Jerusalemites on the Palestinian delegation, then that would be a significant "gesture" on behalf of both Americans and Israelis. The Palestinians, however, and the rest of the Arabs would like that gesture to be translated into concrete action by the U.S., the main co-sponsor of the talks, declaring a clear position on both its interpretation on the applicability of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to the occupied West Bank and Gaza and Jerusalem itself as being also occupied. The U.S. needs to translate its general statements into concrete action, especially its declaration that it wants to play the role of "full partner" in the peace negotiations. Had the previous administration of President George Bush adopted such a policy of active involvement in the past 17 months, the talks would by now have produced tangible results that would have spared both Israelis and Palestinians the recent surge of violence and counter violence and might have saved the lives of so many innocent victims on both sides. The U.S. needs to convince the Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, that he should abandon his quest for a separate deal with Syria that would leave the Palestinians and their problem unattended to. President Hosni Mubarak has already told President Bill Clinton that the Syrian leader, Hafez Al Assad, is not willing to sign peace with the Israelis before the Palestinian question is fully resolved. Nor is anyone else among the Arabs expected to do so. Furthermore, it is in the interest of Israel itself to settle its bloody conflict with the Palestinians. The Israeli people themselves, coming under a sense of insecurity and fear, have already been subjected to the way the Palestinians feel and react to the prolonged Israeli occupation.

It is not enough for the U.S. administration to condemn violence on both sides nor to ask for restraint, two calls that can only fall on deaf ears. Washington needs to take concrete action to force Israel to respect Palestinian human rights and to stop the Israelis from pushing the Palestinians into more despair. So far the Clinton administration deserves some marks for strongly committing itself to the peace process and for vigorously pursuing it. But it needs to do more. In fact all the parties need to do that.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Arabic daily urged the Arab countries to respond to a call by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for quick moves at the international level to ensure sufficient protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Arab territories. The Arab countries ought to move fast in this matter in response to the PLO call and ought to provide an appropriate mechanism to deal with this question, called the paper. The paper cited a recent announcement in Israeli daily newspapers that intensify their operations against the Arab resistance as a new escalation of repression against the Palestinian civilian population. The special units, which are known by the Israeli army, are committing crimes against the Palestinians and are killing the Arab youth, noted the daily. It said that recent statements about the special units' activities mean that Israel is pursuing its criminal strategy against the civilians under the protection of international law. The PLO is to date calling on all Arab countries to take the initiative and launch an offensive at the international level to ensure the necessary protection for the Palestinians, the paper continued. It said that Israel's announcement to step up the work of its criminal units does not in any way serve the cause of peace and tends to further set back any attempts to convene the peace conference.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily called on the Arab states to terminate the U.N. imposed sanctions on Iraq and Libya because, he said, they are unjust and harmful to national interests in addition to violating international laws. Tareq Masarweh said that only the Arab countries are abusing by the sanctions on Iraq since the borders of Turkey and Iran are wide open with the country. A recent statement in Washington said that the Iraqis were openly trading their oil products for food and medicine and other goods from Iran and Turkey, said the writer. He said that while the United States is curbing its contemplating steps to release Iraqi frozen assets in American banks, the Arabs continue to freeze Iraqi accounts and imposing a siege on their Iraqi brothers. The world is changing around the Arabs, but the Arabs themselves refuse to change, he stressed. Turning to Libya, the writer said that the Arab embargoes on that country is also illogical and illegal. The Arabs who are trying to persuade Libya to hand over two men allegedly responsible for the downing of an American plane over Lockerbie, should try to get Israel to hand over their pilots responsible for the downing of a Libyan civilian airliner, he demanded. The Arabs, he added, should not accept a situation whereby collective punishment is imposed on Libya or to comply to please the Western powers, and ought to reject such a situation and end the sanctions.

The challenge of militant Islam

By G.H. Jansen

SOME MUSLIM governments of the East have declared war on political or politicised Islam because in some cases political Islam has declared war on Muslim governments, as events in Egypt and Algeria during the past few months and especially the last few weeks, have made amply clear.

This is a war the governments cannot win, in the short term, because it is a war the Islamists cannot lose, except in the long term.

The latest, clearest evidence of the state of war came on March 10 when the Egyptian security forces attacked Islamic targets in eight widely separated locations and killed 20 persons. The Egyptian government makes no bones about it: it has announced officially that it is no longer, passively, trying to "contain" what it calls the "fundamentalists" but that it will, positively, counter the "fundamentalist threat" and that means either by physical elimination or mass imprisonment.

In the last year 100 people have been killed in Egypt in the course of this Islamic civil war that is being waged in several Middle Eastern countries: the figure for Algeria is probably around 1,000 dead. And on March 21, when 11 activists were sentenced to death, the Algerian ministry of the interior announced that no clemency would be shown to "terrorists".

A check-list of these countries shows that the Islamists have won in two countries where they are now the government: Iran and Sudan in one country; Algeria, where they were rebuffed, in Jordan, where they were outmanoeuvred, to a lesser extent in Morocco and in three or four others where the struggle is in full swing and the outcome as yet uncertain, like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia.

The cardinal factor in this war is the power of Islam. As the youngest of the universal faiths, Islam is very much a living faith sustained by the day-to-day devotion of the one billion members of the Umma. Pitted against that massive solid fact, the antagonism of individual Muslim governments seems merely pathetic. Which is why the Egyptian gov-

ernment, and President Hosni Mubarak personally, is trying to widen the base of the struggle by saying, along with Israel and the U.S., that "Islamic terrorism" is a worldwide phenomenon.

Because of the centrality of Islam in the private and public life of the Umma it is very difficult for the average Muslim to say that he or she does not want to see established, and live in, an Islamic state, however much the modernised Muslim may actually disapprove of the anachronistic aspects of Sharia law which almost all present day Islamists see, incorrectly, as an inescapable part of an Islamic state.

Apart from this religious reason for the enduring strength of political Islam, there are also secular reasons for its vitality. In the Middle East at least there is the provocation and challenge of the presence of Israel and its occupation of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem. The failure of the Muslim states, individually and collectively, to even contain the Jewish state lays them wide open to harsh penetrating criticism from the Islamists. More recently, Israel has set itself up as an enemy of Islam by proclaiming that it would be a bulwark against the new international threat of "pan-Islamic terrorism" as the replacement of the communist threat.

There are secular economic reasons too. It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that if there were not mass educated unemployment in countries like Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan there would be no such thing as "Islamic fundamentalism". All the Muslim countries at war with Islam are those that have conspicuously failed to solve their social and economic ills, a situation of which the Islamists take advantage by setting up their own welfare programmes for health, education, housing and even employment.

Apart from what may be called "administrative reasons," such as corruption and inefficiency, the principal "political reason" for the success of the Islamists is democratic indifference and the failure of the secular and liberal parties to get their members to

vote in elections. In elections, first in Jordan and then in Algeria, Islamic parties did surprisingly well; and the surprise was because they won by default — not so much because of their own intrinsic strength but because of the absenteeism of the followers of other parties. And this was all the more shameful because the dereliction of the democratic duty to vote was, in both countries, due either to biased boredom or to disbelief in the power of the ballot box. Happily, having been given a good fight, the secularists should not be indifferent any more and this new determination to participate could be reinforced by making voting compulsory, as in Cyprus and Australia. Indeed, in Algeria, the secularists have taken the offensive and have organised large, anti-Islamist demonstrations in the streets.

Despite the broad popular base of the "fundamentalist movement," it could only come to power if it wins over the armed forces. Islam prevailed in Iran and the Sudan only after the Islamists won over the hearts and minds of the men with the guns. The Algerian government tried, at the eleventh hour, to frustrate an Islamic takeover through the ballot box only because it retained its control of the army and, partly, of the police.

The favourite tactic of Muslim governments against the "fundamentalists" has been one of option; by seeming to favour or even adopt moderate Islamists and then using them against the "extremists," either Islamic or leftist. The fear of communism has, indirectly, greatly helped militant Islam because it led the governments to half-open the door to what they saw as a lesser evil.

For a long while the Jordanian government made the same mistake but then changed to a more sophisticated tactic. It let the Muslim Brotherhood take power through an election, confident that its strict, narrow fundamentalist programme did not have the answers to the problems of a modern state. After quite a short time, the Brotherhood ministers gladly left the Cabinet because they had not only lost

popularity through incompetence and inexperience but had become laughable. But Jordan is perhaps unique: it could afford to take risks with a fundamentalist movement because the state has certain fixed parameters that ensure its continuity — the monarchy, that is His Majesty King Hussein, and the army.

In a recently published book, "The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality" by John Esposito, the author, a well-known scholar of Islam, criticises the handling of the Islamic parties by Muslim governments because, he says, none of them "seems willing to provide them (the Islamists) with the opportunity to discredit themselves." Jordan provided that "opportunity."

Today, with the current failure in the Middle East and in parts of the Third World of both secular nationalists and of the left, it would seem obvious that political Islam is the wave of the future — at least in the short and medium terms. But as the check list shows, Islam is not doing all that well, and largely because of its own mistakes, one of which is to cling to the Sharia. It can be rebuffed, as in Jordan, by a combination of democracy and social and economic reform. But that is a lot to ask of "soft states" like Egypt, facing apparently insoluble economic problems, like overpopulation which political Islam exacerbates by discouraging birth control.

The prospect before the Islamic World would seem to be this: In the short to medium term, corrupt and inept Muslim governments will not prevail against the organised, dedicated supporters of politicised militant Islam. But once those come to power, their incompetence and ineptitude will become apparent and they could even be corrupted by power and pelf (as in the case of Iran) and this, in the longer term, could lead to a rejection of militant Islam.

The writer is a Cyprus-based journalist specialising in Middle Eastern and Islamic affairs. He contributed the article to the Jordan Times.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Arabs should end side differences and reach a common ground for cooperation

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL press last week gave prominence to the pan-Arab meetings, underway in Amman, the ongoing measures in the occupied Arab lands and to a host of domestic issues.

Under the title "Welcome to Amman," a columnist in Al Ra'i daily wished the Arab labour ministers success in their endeavour, but he urged them to consider the pan-Arab and national dimension which, he said, should override all other considerations.

Abdul Rabbih Omar said that attention should be given to the Arab workers who were driven out of their jobs and place of living in Kuwait and the other Gulf countries due to the Gulf crisis. He also called on the Arab ministers to give due attention to the Arab workers under Israeli occupation and come out with a formula to provide them with material and moral support.

Another columnist in Al Ra'i daily urged the Arab ministers to help their respective countries and end their side differences and reach common ground for cooperation.

Mahmoud Rimawi said that the Arab ministers are called on to discuss a formula that would ensure the free flow of Arab workers from one country to another without any political considerations. While Jordan is opening its doors to Arab workers from other Arab countries, he said, we see most Arab states closing their doors to the Jordanian workers due to political differences with this country.

Sultan Hattab, another Al Ra'i columnist, referred to His Majesty King Hussein's appeal to the Arab countries to rise above their differences and embark on meaningful collective work benefiting their nation.

The writer said that the Arab labour ministers are called on to help patch differences among their countries, caused by the Gulf crisis, so that they can dedicate their efforts to dealing with the common challenges ahead.

Ahmad Dabbas, a writer in Sawt Al Shaab, echoed the views concerning the need to ensure the free government of workers, but noted that this decision is in the hands of the

Arab ministers of labour who are meeting in Amman.

The writer said that the Arab ministers are urged to find a solution to the plight of the Jordanians, the Palestinians, the Iraqis and the Sudanese who lost their means of living as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Under the title "The ugly American bias towards Israel," Al Dastour daily bitterly criticised the recent statements of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher before Congress in which he reaffirmed Washington's total backing of Israel.

The U.S. secretary did not suffice himself with pledges for continued annual aid to Israel, reaching up to \$3 billion, he also reaffirmed his country's support for the Jewish state to settle the immigrants on occupied Arab land, noted the daily.

Accusing Mr. Christopher of opening a U.S. confrontation with the Arab World, Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i said, that the U.S. Secretary has disregarded the ongoing peace process, the international rules and the international legitimacy and instead decided to reaffirm his country's backing for Israel's inhuman practices.

The writer, said the statement, gave rise to astonishment because the United States has no interest in being hostile to the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Dwelling on the same topic, Sawt Al Shaab daily criticised the U.S. administration for insisting that the Arabs resume their peace talks with Israel but without the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 on the repatriation of the expellees. This insistence has created great anxiety among the Palestinians and the Arab parties to the talks in general and prompted the Palestinian people to voice their rejection of the peace process, said the paper.

Saleh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dastour, strongly attacked the Arab countries which have remained passive as to the Israeli inhuman practices against the Palestinian people. The Israelis are committing massacres in the occupied lands, but the cries of children and bereaved women do not

reach the ears of the Arab countries that continue to remain passive, said the writer. The writer said that the negative attitude on the part of the Arab World clearly indicates that the Arab regimes are being silenced by an upper hand or perhaps they have reached a state of total despair and are washing their hands of the Palestinians.

Parliamentary election laws and Parliament's performance were the main domestic topics tackled by the local writers.

I am not one of those enthusiasts who support the present election law because I call for amendments, said Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dastour. The present law allows refugee camps and whole villages to vote, but does not give due representation to them in Parliament, he stressed.

He noted also the present election law allows the success of a group of candidates, affiliated to a single prominent candidate, running together as one block despite the fact that many of those in the bloc are unknown to the electorate.

The writer called for immediate amendments to the law in such a manner that would give impetus to the democratisation process.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab said the Lower House of Parliament, which ended its active meetings at the end of last month, ought to have passed important decisions that should not have been left to the Executive authority to handle.

Abdul Majid Nuseir said that Parliament should have reaffirmed the following conditions to ensure successful parliamentary elections this year. These are: allowing minorities to retain a number of seats, in the House, proportionate to their number, taking into consideration bedouin, urban and rural areas and fixing a number of candidates to be voted for in each constituency.

interest, said the writer. Temporary laws to be issued by the government in the absence of Parliament ought, however, to be submitted to the deputies for approval once the new House has been elected, he demanded.

Saleh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dastour, said that the outgoing House of Representatives did its share in pointing to a government mismanagement, corruption and other issues of public interest and for this it must be commended.

In a space of four years this Parliament could not be expected to do everything and tackle the problems that have been plaguing the country for ages, the writer said. One should be fair to the deputies and acknowledge their achievements in a number of fields despite their failure to handle serious questions, he added.

Abdulla Al Khatib, a columnist in Al Dastour, said that it is not only the ministers who are to be considered responsible for the appointment of relatives and acquaintances in government offices. Nepotism and disregard of regulations in appointing people to government offices is the responsibility of the whole society, not only that of ministers and their officials, said the writer.

A minister is part of this society and comes under pressures like any other member of it, and therefore, any regulation to be introduced by Parliament should be able to help the country to check and prevent any tampering with regulations and prevent mismanagement before it occurs.

Mohammad Subeili, a columnist in Al Dastour, said that every day we hear officials and even academic lecturers assuring the public that Jordan is not facing organised crime, but the country continues to witness different forms of crime often with criminals resorting to new techniques.

The writer said "we should not act like an ostrich, burying our heads in the sand to make believe that crime does not exist, but ought to admit that criminal activities are growing with the growth of population and difficult social and economic difficulties.

Letter from the U.N.

Semantics of morality

By Waleed Sadi

THE MEMBERS of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC) battled endlessly last week over the meaning and purview of "morals" and "morality" as appearing in Article 18 of the International Covenant and Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Paragraph 3 of Article 18 reads as follows: "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, morals, etc."

The controversy over the word "morals" stemmed from the issue of what constitutes "morals" anyway and whether any such morals need to be based on one basic religion or belief. In attempting a daring construction of the word "morals" within the context of the covenant, some members of the committee suggested that whatever the word means, it "should not rely exclusively on criteria based on a single religion belief." What to do with states which have a state religion and how to deal with this issue in the context of one religion which is dominant in any particular country drew much debate.

The discussions got even bogged down over the difference, if any, between "morals" and "morality," when some experts raised doubts about the wisdom of using the two words interchangeably. But this semantic problem was replaced at last when the committee found a preliminary compromise which proposed that "morals" within the context of the covenant is a secular concept that is derived from many social, philosophical and religious traditions.

Consequently, it was suggested that limitations on the freedom to manifest a religion or belief for the purposes of protecting "morals" must not in any case be based on one single tradition not matter how the phenomenon is interpreted. This idea drew criticism from some members who criticised the mere mention of morality as essentially a secular concept and suggested instead that, if anything, it is both sectarian and secular.

At the end of the heated deliberations, it was decided to drop the reference to both terms in favour of a neutral one that simply stipulated that morals derive from many religions, philosophies and social systems. But the provision that morals cannot depend on one particular tradition or religion or social system was retained. This ruling was essentially a setback to states which have either a state religion or one dominant religion.

Still attempts by some committee members from religious societies to raise doubts about the functionality of this ruling were brushed aside on the strength of the argument that the covenant does not allow for the superiority of one religion

over another even when there is a state religion as such. This controversial issue of state religions will be further debated when the committee takes up the matter separately.

There is already on the table of the HRC a text that goes along the following lines: "The establishment of a state religion does not contravene either the freedom of religion or the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of religion or belief." There are strong voices in the U.N. human rights body, however, who wish to kill this interpretation of the ICCPR even though there is a qualifying clause attached to it that states that "certain measures affecting the adherents of non-established religions or atheists, such as measures restricting eligibility for government service to members of an established or recognised religion, giving economic privileges to the latter or imposing special restrictions on the practice of other faiths, are not in accordance with the prohibition of discrimination based on religion or belief."

The debate over this complex issue is expected to dominate the deliberations of the HRC committee for the rest of its spring session. In this vein, there is nevertheless agreement between the proponents and the objectors to the principle that state religions do not violate the covenant under consideration that state parties to the ICCPR are duty-bound to report on "measures taken by state parties with a state religion to protect the practices of other religions or beliefs from impermissible infringement and to protect their adherents from discrimination."

Similarly, information with respect to rights of minority religions is also called for by the committee in order for it to assess the extent to which freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief has been implemented by state parties.

There are other subjects for the human rights experts to clear up in the course of the remaining days of the session which are also connected with freedom of religion. The topic of official ideology and the thorny subject of conscientious objections are also on the agenda of the HRC. These two items are also expected to draw fire from several prominent members of the human rights tribunal, especially with regard to official ideology where there is considerable disagreement among members on whether such an issue calls for a specific interpretation by the HRC.

Conscientious objection is less controversial in view of the widespread sympathy for conscientious objectors who refuse to bear arms because of their religious beliefs and is expected therefore to receive a favourable consideration.

The writer is on the editorial staff of the Jordan Times and a member of the U.N. Human Rights Committee.

LETTERS

Dedication

To the Editor:

WE are a group of Italian tourists who have visited your country recently with a tour organised by Rallo Viaggi and we must say that Jordan is a very fascinating country.

Before leaving we felt a natural, almost obliging impulse to stress the professionalism of the guide in charge of our tour, Mohammad Saleh.

He made us understand with great humbleness and incomparable knowledge the richness and beauty of the country as well as the great historical testimony of Jordan.

We will remember Mr. Saleh not only for his cultural knowledge but also for his sensibility which, we believe, is a moving creed that made him state: "To read the ancient stones for the foreign tourists is not only a must, but a research and revelation of what time has saved for the sake of the future generations."

Such a statement implies not only professionalism but poetry as well.

Thank you Mohammed. Thank you Jordan.

Signed by 26 Italian Rallo tourists

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

U.S. said to be pressing Israel

(Continued from page 1)

Husseini has met, probably more than once, with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, since last December.

"We read in the Israeli press suggestions that they are ready to sit with me, a Jerusalem native, at the negotiating table," Mr. Hussein told Reuters in Tunis where he was attending a PLO meeting.

The Israeli official quoted by the Post denied receiving any official request for the inclusion of Palestinian Jerusalem residents in the negotiating team.

The Israeli government has constantly refused to talk to Jerusalem Palestinians lest that be seen as a concession on the status of Jerusalem that Israel declared its "undivided capital" after the 1967 war. The Palestinians have been pressing the U.S. to take a stand on the issue and declare that Jerusalem was part of the territories occupied in 1967 and likewise must be vacated by the occupying Israelis.

Mr. Ra'fat told the Jordan Times this week that a package of U.S. assurances and Israeli concessions would be unveiled simultaneously with a "yes" from the Palestinian negotiators to return to the peace talks a few days before round nine is to begin April 20.

U.S. government spokespersons and the Israeli spokesmen have said on a number of occasions that no concessions towards the Palestinians would be forthcoming until they agree publicly to return to the talks. On the other hand, Palestinians have insisted that they cannot return to the talks without concessions, which they say they need in order to get the backing from their constituents in the occupied territories.

Djerejian reports compromise package

(Continued from page 1)

The U.S., "together with our Russian co-sponsors, is prepared to pay the role of a full partner in the talks, to act as an honest broker and facilitator, not an arbiter," he said.

The U.S. official denied the continuing "violence and killings on both sides" in the Israeli-occupied territories saying it could undermine the peace process. He said the possibility of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was not discussed during the recent Egyptian-American talks in Washington.

Mr. Djerejian, however, offered an insight into American thinking on Resolution 242, which calls for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories in return for peace with the Arabs.

Rejecting as "false" the analogy between Security Council resolution 242 and 799, which demands an immediate Israeli repatriation of the Palestinians expelled in December, Mr. Djerejian said:

"Quite frankly, I will be delighted if... I could sit here and say that I am confident that 242 and 338 will be fully implemented by the end of the year."

Following are some of the key comments Mr. Djerejian made during the interview:

"After the extensive efforts that we have made with the Israelis and the Palestinians, we have worked out a comprehensive package on the deportee issue that ends up with the full realization and full implementation of 799."

"According to the arrangements that have been worked out between the United States, Israel, and the Palestinians, all the deportees — all the deportees — will be returned, and that there is a schedule whereby, right up front, if they wanted to come back, 101 can return now. They could have returned many weeks ago if they so wished to, but have refused to, and that there is a process that the Israelis have put in place that can have more deportees returned."

"Now, the arrangements that we've worked out are fully consistent with 799, and the Israeli government itself has said that the understandings that Israel has worked out with the United States are consistent with the principle of 799. The analogy with 242/338, I find, is a curious one, because at the end of this year, even if nothing else happened, at the end of this year, all — all — of the deportees will be able to return, which, obviously, is the whole thrust of 799. Quite frankly, I would be very delighted if 242 — I could sit here and say that I am confident that 242 and 338 will be fully implemented by the end of this year."

"We do not see ourselves as some sort of judge that renders decisions that the parties must follow. That is not our role, because, again, the heart of the Madrid peace process is direct, face-to-face negotiations between the parties."

"But we see ourselves as playing and capable of playing a very important role as an intermediary and facilitator and honest broker to help the parties narrow their substantive differences, to exchange ideas, to help produce momentum at key points in the talks."

"I can say that in terms of the Arab-Israeli peace process, the Palestinian issue, the whole approach toward achieving an Arab-Israeli peace settlement that is just, real, and durable, based on 242 and 338 and all the principles associated with those resolutions, that there is continuity between the two administrations. President Clinton made this clear at the very beginning of the administration. There are certain fundamental interests for the United States in terms of its foreign policy and that there will be continuity on certain very important issues that reflect these interests."

"The time has come for decision making. The time has come to not lose more time, and you who live in the region know better than we that in the absence of forward movement on the Arab-Israeli peace process, the situation does not stand still, the situation gets worse, and I think to avoid the continuation of violence and killings and suffering in the region that we have witnessed in recent weeks that the leadership on all sides should definitely now commit themselves to resuming the talks, because it is our analysis that at the end of the day the only viable way out of the suffering that we are witnessing in the region today is to make progress on and achieve a peace settlement."

"Progress on such arrangements and self-government will be a major step, we think, toward the improving the situation in the occupied territories and thereby giving a major impetus to preparing for final status negotiations."

"We have very significant discussions with (Israeli) Prime Minister (Yitzhak) Rabin when he was here recently to meet with President Clinton, and it was very clear to the president, to the secretary of state in our extensive discussions with the Israeli prime minister that he has a very strong commitment to achieving real peace and his commitment is also, I think, reasserted by his sense that where is an historic opportunity now to achieve an Arab-Israeli peace settlement. He also has the view that 1993 is a very important year — indeed, a year there this opportunity can be realized, where significant can be made toward an Arab-Israeli peace settlement."

Peres: Deal is 'in the air'

(Continued from page 1)

proposed new members of the team were Palestinian spokeswomen Hanan Ashrawi, Sari Nusseibeh and Zahira Kamal, who are Jerusalem-born.

At a Washington briefing for reporters, a senior U.S. official said Palestinians have been told what new gestures they can expect from Israel if they first agree to resume peace talks.

"I can tell you one thing for sure and that is nothing will happen if they don't accept (the invitation). If they do accept... some good things will happen, but I'm not going to try to define here what those good things are... (the Palestinians) know what they are," the official said.

As for Mr. Hussein, the official said it was clear from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's first meeting with Palestinians on a trip to the Middle East in February that Mr. Hussein was the Palestinian delegation's leader.

Mr. Christopher found Mr. Hussein to be "very well informed... tough and assertive but

nevertheless... understanding and moderate and with a very strong sense of history," the official said.

He added that Mr. Christopher concluded that as a group the Palestinians "certainly would benefit from some cohesive leadership and... Faisal Hussein provided that kind of leadership."

Mr. Hussein told Reuters before the newspaper report appeared that he saw a shift by Israel towards accepting him at the negotiations but did not confirm or deny that the United States was backing such a move.

Commenting on Mr. Peres' statement, Mr. Hussein said in Tunis: "Yes, there is a suggestion like that... until now, Israel refuses to let me sit at the negotiating table, but we are bearing that such an obstacle can be resolved."

"As of now, there is nothing official — as Mr. Peres said, this is 'in the air'."

Mr. Hussein has been at PLO headquarters since last week working closely with Mr. Arafat and maintaining contacts with the U.S. administration through the American embassy in Tunis.

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Mr. Christopher said Mr. Hussein to be "very well informed... tough and assertive but nevertheless... understanding and moderate and with a very strong sense of history," the official said.

He added that Mr. Christopher concluded that as a group the Palestinians "certainly would benefit from some cohesive leadership and... Faisal Hussein provided that kind of leadership."

Mr. Hussein told Reuters before the newspaper report appeared that he saw a shift by Israel towards accepting him at the negotiations but did not confirm or deny that the United States was backing such a move.

Commenting on Mr. Peres' statement, Mr. Hussein said in Tunis: "Yes, there is a suggestion like that... until now, Israel refuses to let me sit at the negotiating table, but we are bearing that such an obstacle can be resolved."

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Equitable water sharing possible in W. Bank, Gaza

WASHINGTON (USIA) — While the problem of equitably sharing water resources between the Palestinians and Israel is a serious one, it is not a problem without solution, a Palestinian expert says.

The conflict over sharing water resources "could represent a serious impediment to the peace settlement, but it should not. The conflict can be resolved," Sharif Al Musa of the Institute for Palestine Studies said during an April 8 briefing at the Middle East Institute.

Dr. Musa said Gaza, in particular, "needs an emergency (water) relief programme."

"There is a substantial level of consumption by Palestinians," with only 15 to 20 gallons of water available a day per unit, he said. (He noted that one flush of a toilet uses up four gallons of water). This lack of water has caused sanitation and health problems, he said.

The water supply in Gaza is "full of nitrates," and the water quality in the West Bank is also deteriorating, he reported.

In addition, he said, there is a "wide water gap between Palestinians and Israelis." According to Dr. Musa, "Israel consumes three to four times per capita as much as Palestinians." In the agricultural sector, Israel consumes "four times per capita more than the Palestinians."

Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza "get much more water than the Palestinians per capita," and at cheaper prices, he said.

The water situation in the West Bank and Gaza is "deplorable," Dr. Musa said.

Dr. Musa said, "Israel is acting like a great sponge," he said.

A redistribution of the common water resources would not cause substantial injury to Israel, he said. He argued that Israel has alternative water resources avail-

able, such as the large aquifer under the Naqab desert and the technology and economic capacity to desalinate water.

For the Palestinians, however, the aquifers in the occupied territories are their only source of water, he said. Israel, he stressed, must agree to a redistribution of the common water resources in order to address this disparity.

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Eleven Black Sea countries set joint bank's share capital

ATHENS (R) — The 11 countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation agreed Friday on the share capital for a regional investment bank which they want to create as the backbone of a newly established pact.

The Greek chairman of a two-day working group said delegates agreed on share capital of at least one billion Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) — equivalent to around \$1.4 billion.

"Deciding on the capital was a big step forward," Iakovos Georgas, who is also the executive vice-chairman of the private Piraeus Bank, told Reuters.

SDRs are reserve assets created by the International Monetary Fund. Their value is a composite of the dollar, yen, mark, pound and French franc.

Mr. Georgas said he suggested to the group that although the share capital should be at least this level, the paid-in capital might have to be limited to reflect the state of the economies of participating countries.

He said the joint investment bank, seen as the driving force in forging closer ties between countries of the Black Sea, the Balkans and several former Soviet republics, should not rely on countries' contribution.

"It should have the power and credibility to attract capital from the international financial markets," he told the meeting.

The pact, signed on July 25 last year in Istanbul, is aimed at promoting cooperation between

nations which have often been foes and at eventually freeing the movement of people, goods and services in the area in a way similar to the European Community (EC).

Its members are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Representative from economy and foreign ministries, as well as central banks, participated in the working group, which also discussed the possible location of the bank.

"Proposals were made for the Greek city of Salonika, Istanbul, Sofia and Bucharest," Mr. Georgas said. "They will be included in a report we will submit to our governments."

The distribution of shares was not discussed extensively but he could not foresee it creating a problem.

"All countries will have a say on important matters regardless of share distribution, like in the EC," he said.

The joint bank and projects on ecology, power, transport, information and communications are the first steps in the Turkish-inspired cooperation pact.

Despite widespread agreement on the need for a bank to give the pact the financial resources needed to succeed, participants acknowledged that there remained many practical difficulties.

Dollar dips to record low against yen

TOKYO (AP) — Continuing its persistent downward trend, the U.S. dollar dipped to another record low against the Japanese yen Friday, while Tokyo share prices failed to gather steam to break the 20,000-point mark.

The dollar closed at 113.15 yen, down 0.50 yen from Thursday's finish and its lowest close in Tokyo since the modern exchange rates were set up in the late 1940s.

The dollar has now closed at record lows on five of the last seven trading days in Tokyo. It has fallen a total of 11.73 yen, or 9.4 per cent, since Feb. 2.

After opening at 113.55 yen, the dollar moved no higher than 113.58 yen. In New York, it finished overnight at 113.40 yen, a new postwar low there.

"The dollar's downturn is dominating the market," said Yasuhisa Ishida, a senior dealer with Mitsui Trust and Banking. Mr. Ishida said many in the market expect the dollar will edge as low as 110 yen toward the end of this month.

There were rumours that Japan's central bank intervened to slow the yen's appreciation against the dollar during Friday's trading, the dealer said.

The Bank of Japan has stepped into the market on several occasions since last week in an attempt to stem the yen's rapid surge, but little effect was expected unless the yen-selling was coordinated with the central banks of the United States and other wealthy nations.

Japanese government officials have been expressing concern over the yen's continued appreciation against the dollar, saying it will hurt export-oriented manufacturing companies by making their exports more expensive abroad.

Analysts said there is strong demand for the yen among foreign investors amid some signs of an economy recovery in Japan, including recent strong gains on the Tokyo stock market, while some skepticism about the pace of U.S. economic recovery has recently loomed.

The 225-issue Nikkei stock average fell 75.09 points, or 0.38 per cent, closing the week at 19,892.18. Thursday, the average rose 138.04 points, or 0.70 per cent.

The Nikkei was moderately higher at the end of the morning session on a buying spree by government-directed public pension funds, but headed lower in the afternoon on selling by investment trust funds, dealers said.

"The market just saved momentum today before heading higher next week," said Maki Fukushima, an analyst with Nikko Securities.

The Japanese government is to announce a major economy-bolstering package early next week.

The Tokyo stock price index of all issues listed on the first section, up from Thursday's 664 million shares. Despite declines in the major indexes, advancing issues outnumbered declines 568 to 490, with 125 issues unchanged.

French minister pledges lower interest rates, higher taxes

PARIS (R) — Economy Minister Edmond Alphandery, fleshing out a keynote speech by France's new conservative prime minister, Friday promised lower interest rates to help pull the country out of recession.

But he also admitted that higher taxes would be needed to plug a yawning public deficit.

Mr. Alphandery added detail to Prime Minister Edouard Balladur's 110-minute speech to parliament Thursday, which was widely praised for its conciliatory tone but criticised for being unclear and long-winded.

"The proposals are still vague and short of substance," commented Jack Lang, deputy premier in the Socialist government that was swept out of office last month.

"A bit of a yawner," said centrist deputy Yann Piat. Mr. Alphandery told Europe 1 radio that a measure authorising an ambitious privatisation programme would be presented to parliament by the end of next week.

But the sell-off of the state's large stakes in industry and banks would not begin until mid-year.

A bill making the Bank of France independent, a cornerstone in the government's strategy to prevent a renewed speculative run on the franc, would be voted into law by the end of June.

The prospect of the French central bank being granted the same autonomy as Germany's powerful Bundesbank has reassured financial markets that French inflation, already low, will be kept in check. That has bolstered the franc.

Mr. Alphandery said the downward trend in interest rates would continue, helped by an independent Bank of France and market confidence that the new government would stimulate savings by keeping a lid on the budget deficit.

Since the centre-right was swept to power in late March, the

interest rate that banks pay on three-month loans has fallen by 1.5 percentage points to about nine per cent. But that is still about 1.25 points above Germany's comparable rate.

"I can assure you that they (interest rates) are going to fall several points (by the end of the year)," Mr. Alphandery said.

But he added that France, which suffered a fall in industrial output in the last quarter of 1992, would not pull out of recession before 1994.

He prescribed higher taxes to trim a deficit in social security and retirement pension accounts, estimated to top 100 billion francs (\$20 billion) this year, saying: "I would prefer that we raise the taxes on petrol, tobacco and maybe alcohol."

Mr. Balladur has impressed the press and commentators. "Exemplary, truly exemplary," wrote left-wing daily Liberation. But trade unions and the left-wing opposition have been critical.

"It was extremely timid," said former socialist prime minister Michel Rocard, claiming that Mr. Balladur's strategy for combating unemployment was shopworn.

Marc Blondel, head of the Force Ouvriere trade union, belittled a plan to create jobs by trimming the cost to employers of hiring new workers. "Bosses employ because they need workers, not because it costs less," he said.

Mr. Rocard, who has taken over the leadership of the Socialists, said Mr. Balladur had stirred doubts about his commitment to European integration by failing to mention either the Maastricht treaty or a common European currency.

But the leader of the extreme-right National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, judged that Mr. Balladur had given too strong an endorsement of Europe by calling for a strengthened European Monetary System and an EC-sponsored European peace conference.

Jordan cuts foreign debts to \$6.6 billion

AMMAN (Petra) — Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi said Thursday that Jordan has achieved monetary stability as the Kingdom succeeded in controlling inflation and guaranteeing the convertibility of the Jordanian dinar at a stable rate.

In a seminar organised by the Jordanian Banking Studies Institute at the Plaza Hotel, Dr. Nabulsi said CBJ's reserves of foreign currency have risen from JD 76 million in 1988 to JD 560 million in November 1992. Also Jordan's foreign debts dropped from \$8 billion in 1988 to \$6.6 billion in 1992, with basic changes in the structure of the debts in Jordan's favour.

Dr. Nabulsi reviewed the roots of the economic crisis witnessed in Jordan, the economic reform programme and the country's monetary policy. He specifically mentioned successes in containing inflationary pressures, managing interest rates in a more flexible manner, stabilising the Jordanian dinar's exchange rate, building Jordan's reserves of foreign exchange and the foreign indebtedness problem.

The CBJ governor outlined future monetary policy plans and spoke about the reform in banking sector in Jordan.

He said the Jordanian economy, characterised by its small size, lack of natural resources and its dependence on foreign economies, particularly those of neighbouring Arab countries, was significantly affected by economic and political changes which swept the region.

The Jordanian economy, he said, has managed in the period between 1972-82 to achieve high growth rates almost unprecedented in neighbouring countries because of the suitable conditions witnessed in the Arab region as a result of the oil boom.

The start of the Gulf crisis prevented the possibility of continuing the economic reform programmes for the years 1989 and 1993, he said, adding that Jordan then adopted a new national economic reform programme for the years 1992-1998.

By the beginning of the 1980s, the economic performance was clearly influenced by foreign developments and the ensuring domestic economic pressures, which all led to enlarging the gap between the balances of local and foreign payments and thus resulted in a deficit in the general budget and the balance of payments, he said.

As a result, he added, the policy in Jordan was to reduce the gap through expanding domestic and foreign borrowing, until the deficit in the budget and the balance of payments reached a situation that could not be sustained noting that the Kingdom utilized all means to borrow from abroad while the reserves dropped to very low points.

Dr. Nabulsi said in view of the continuation of the adverse conditions in the region and the insufficiency of reform efforts to confront them, economic pressures surfaced at the end of 1988 when the Jordanian dinar's exchange rate faced an acute crisis and Jordan stopped paying its foreign debts. Consequently, Jordan adopted a national economic reform programme for the years 1989-1993 with the objective of regaining the domestic and foreign monetary balance and addressing structural malfunctions which accumulated during the 1980s, he pointed out.

He said that Jordan managed from 1989 till start of the Gulf crisis to regain stability and resume economic growth and achieve most of the goals of the economic reform programme.

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Financial Markets

In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 7/4/1993	Tokyo Close Date: 8/4/1993
Sterling Pound*	1.5135	1.5153
Deutsche Mark	1.6189	1.6167
Swiss Franc	1.4910	1.4881
French Franc	5.4770	5.4615 **
Japanese Yen	113.55	113.65
European Currency Unit	1.2010	1.2041 **

* USD For STG
** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 8/4/1993

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.76	3.25	3.34	3.59
Sterling Pound	5.68	5.68	5.75	5.62
Deutsche Mark	8.12	7.87	7.43	6.75
Swiss Franc	5.06	4.87	4.68	4.37
French Franc	9.37	9.12	8.26	7.87
Japanese Yen	3.72	3.21	3.25	3.25
European Currency Unit	9.12	8.93	8.43	7.87

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Previous Metals Date: 8/4/1993

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm*	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	337.95	6.65	Silver	3.88	.090

* 21 Karat
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 8/4/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6870	0.6890
Sterling Pound	1.0402	1.0454
Deutsche Mark	0.4244	0.4265
Swiss Franc	0.4612	0.4635
French Franc	0.1254	0.1260
Japanese Yen*	0.6036	0.6066
Dutch Guilder	0.3774	0.3793
Swedish Krona	0.0896	0.0900
Italian Lira*	0.0432	0.0434
Belgian Franc	0.02060	0.02070

* Per 100
Other Currencies Date: 8/4/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.6040	1.6420
Lebanese Lira*	0.03615	0.04055
Saudi Riyal	0.1828	0.1843
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2350	2.2800
Qatari Riyal	0.1863	0.1882
Egyptian Pound	0.1950	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7580	1.7820
UAE Dirham	0.1863	0.1882
Greek Drachma*	0.5136	0.5336
Cypriot Pound	1.4085	1.4275

* Per 100
CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market* Date: 8/4/1993

Index	7/4/1993	Close	6/4/1993	Close
All-Share	194.96		194.92	
Banking Sector	134.80		134.83	
Insurance Sector	214.47		214.16	
Industry Sector	278.45		278.49	
Services Sector	257.51		256.21	

* December 31, 1990 = 100

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (03/04/1993 - 07/04/1993)

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	361,904	0.750	0.760	0.810
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	65,086	2.600	2.570	2.630
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	35,947	0.760	0.770	0.780
RAJSTAR INVESTMENT	4,814	2.750	3.660	3.720
TOTAL	467,750			

WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
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WEEKLY REPORT

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel.: 677420

Macaulay Culkin
HOME ALONE 2

"LOST IN NEW YORK"

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel.: 699238

Nabilah Obeid...in
TOOT...TOOT

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155

AHLAN THEATRE
presents
Welcome Parliament and Budget
On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m.

Welcome New World Order
On Thursday at 5 p.m. and on Friday at 9:00 p.m.
Please make advance reservation

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel.: 634144

Susan Sarandon & James Spader... In
WHITE PALACE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30,

Refugees fight fiercely to board U.N. trucks in Srebrenica

TUZLA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — The ones who arrived exhausted and hungry, who were stoned by Serbs during a four-hour trip — they were lucky.

The others didn't make it. Thousands of desperate Muslims stormed a U.N. relief convoy when it arrived in Srebrenica and fought fiercely for places on the trucks that would take them out of the besieged Muslim enclave.

About 2,000 reached the relative safety of Tuzla but only after being stoned by Serbs as they passed through Zvornik in the open trucks. One woman was hit in the eye and several others in the head.

"We all desperately want to go. It was very crowded," said Magula Vrakjovina, 55, who made it on one of the trucks leaving Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia. "Everyone was beating each other."

Mr. Vrakjovina said he saw a soldier throw one woman off a truck, killing her. She also said two babies suffocated, but officials travelling with the convoy could not confirm any deaths. At least nine people died during evacuations last week.

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He was prevented Thursday from entering Srebrenica with about 150 Canadian peacekeepers when about 300 Zvornik Serbs ringed his armoured car. He had hoped his presence in the town would keep Serbs from attacking Muslims there. He headed instead for Tuzla.

Some of the bloodiest fighting in the year-old war over Bosnia's secession from Yugoslavia has centred on Srebrenica, where up to 60,000 stranded Muslim residents and refugees face cold, hunger and Serb attacks.

Pierre Ollier of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who was travelling with the convoy, said people rushed to board the trucks before the food and medicine could even be fully unloaded.

"We were unable to unload the last trucks, they just threw off the aid," he said. "There was a huge panic. It was very violent."

He said local authorities tried to take some people off to make room for wounded and others who had been selected to leave, but that only made the situation worse.

Officials in Srebrenica had blocked two evacuation attempts this week, saying they feared the operation could weaken the

town's defence.

Serb leaders have been demanding the evacuation of 18,000 Serbs from Muslim-controlled Tuzla in exchange for cooperation over Srebrenica. They claim thousands of Serbs are being forced to stay in Tuzla, although few seem to want to leave.

Another U.N. relief convoy was delivering flour to a Muslim suburb of Sarajevo Thursday when Serbs found 48 boxes of ammunition wedged in the bed of the trucks.

This was a serious embarrassment for U.N. officials, who have denied Serb claims that their aid convoys were used to smuggle arms and ammunition to the outgunned Bosnian government, and have expressed outrage at meticulous searches at Serb checkpoints.

U.N. spokesman John McMillan said an investigation was underway.

The U.N. Security Council, meanwhile, is trying to increase pressure on Bosnian Serbs to sign an international peace accord. Bosnian Muslims and Croats have already signed.

In New York, the Council put the finishing touches on a resolution to tighten trade restrictions on Yugoslavia by cracking down on smuggling and freezing Yugoslav financial assets in other nations. The council's president said

he was aiming for adoption of the resolution Monday.

The Council hopes Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and his government will pressure their Bosnian Serb allies to sign an international peace accord. Serbia says it can influence Bosnian Serbs but not compel them to accept any agreement.

NATO said it would start enforcing a no-fly zone over Bosnia on Monday. The Security Council authorised the 16-nation alliance last week to shoot down violators if necessary. It is a largely symbolic gesture because Bosnian Serbs have not relied much on air power.

More than 134,000 people are dead or missing in the Bosnian fighting, and 2 million more are homeless.

Russian special envoy Vitaly Churkin met in Belgrade with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, Russia, a traditional Serb ally, has repeatedly delayed tougher U.N. sanctions against Yugoslavia.

Mr. Churkin was believed to have made new proposals to bring peace to Bosnia. He said the world cannot "waste time" waiting for Serbs to sign the plan devised by mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, which partition Bosnia into 10 semi-autonomous provinces along mainly ethnic grounds.



Muslim refugees from besieged eastern town of Srebrenica are crammed onto a U.N. truck (AFP photo)

Balladur confirms he will meet Le Pen

PARIS (R) — New conservative French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur confirmed Friday he planned to meet extreme-right National Front (FN) leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and defended the move in the name of tolerance.

France's mainstream political parties have long boycotted the anti-immigrant front, branded racist and undemocratic by critics. The FN won 12.5 per cent of the vote in last month's general elections but no seats because of the two-round constituency voting system.

Mr. Balladur told Reuters he would receive leaders of both the National Front and the Ecologist movement, which also failed to gain representation in the National Assembly despite winning 7.6 per cent of the vote.

"Both represent part of public opinion. I cannot preach toler-

ance and at the same time exclude anybody," he said.

Mr. Balladur said former Gaullist Prime Minister Jacques Chirac had received Mr. Le Pen in 1988 as part of a round of consultations on a new law on political party funding.

"I will do as much," the premier said.

Mr. Balladur, having sought consensus, won a cautious welcome from nearly all sides for a policy speech to parliament that vowed to tackle unemployment and revive a sluggish economy.

Fellow conservatives, opposition leaders and union officials found little on which to fault the Gaullist premier after Thursday's 110-minute address that touched all aspects of policy without giving much away about immediate plans.

"It's a step in the right direction," was the somewhat unenthusiastic reaction of several senior members of Mr. Balladur's Rally for the Republic (RPR) party including former Public Security Minister Robert Pandraud late Thursday.

Jack Lang, deputy premier in the Socialist government that was catapulted out of office last month, said Mr. Balladur had made a good speech, but added: "The proposals are still vague and short of substance, we'll have to see."

Keeping his distance from the tough line taken by the last conservative government in 1986-88, Mr. Balladur promised not to seek conflict with Socialist President Francois Mitterrand and urged respect for the law in a promised crackdown on crime and illegal immigration.

Khasbulatov urges anti-Yeltsin vote

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Khasbulatov, chairman in Russia's top legislature, called on people Friday to vote against President Boris Yeltsin's economic policies in a national referendum.

Addressing a meeting of deputies, Mr. Khasbulatov, referring to radical market reformers in Mr. Yeltsin's team, said: "You and all people in this country should think over in whose hands they want power to be: Do they really want a collective Rasputin?"

A right-wing deputy last month first used the phrase "a collective Rasputin" — an allusion to the debauched priest who held sway

over the last Tsar and his family — to refer to market reformers in the Yeltsin leadership.

The April 25 referendum, which Mr. Yeltsin hopes will decide his power struggle with the Congress of People's Deputies which Mr. Khasbulatov chairs, includes questions on confidence in Mr. Yeltsin and his economic reforms.

Mr. Khasbulatov said the political confrontation was between people who wanted to push ahead with reform as fast as possible, even at the price of impoverishing people and those "who strive to balance this by creating a stable state."

"It is clear that people are beginning to understand the essence of the conflict and that is why committees to defend the constitution are being formed throughout the country," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev cut short a visit to Central Asia and returned to Moscow Friday at the behest of President Yeltsin, ITAR-TASS News Agency said.

Mr. Kozyrev was in Tajikistan on his way home from a visit to Pakistan. He had been due to visit two other former Soviet republics, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Japan may pull out troops from Cambodia

TOKYO (R) — Japan may pull its troops out of Cambodia if the Khmer Rouge escalates attacks on U.N. personnel to disrupt next month's elections, Defence Minister Toshio Nakayama said Friday.

"If it becomes clear that a widespread armed disruption of the election is in force, we must of course think of an emergency evacuation or a halt in operations," Mr. Nakayama told a news conference.

Mr. Nakayama's remarks came a day after gunmen in Cambodia killed an unarmed Japanese U.N. volunteer. U.N. officials said they suspected Khmer Rouge guerrillas were responsible.

Mr. Nakayama's statement went beyond his government's first reaction Thursday that the killing would not alter plans to help U.N. activities in Cambodia.

"In order to help achieve peace in Cambodia, there will be no changes in our plans regarding our peacekeeping operations," cabinet spokesman Yohei Kono said Thursday.

Atsuhito Nakata, 25, from the Geneva-based U.N. Volunteer, was the first Japanese to be killed in Cambodia. Mr. Nakata was helping set up the May 23 elections in the country.

About 200 other Japanese civilians are helping with reconstruction and development projects in Cambodia. Japan has also sent a 600-strong army engineering unit to Cambodia, its first deployment of troops overseas since World War II. The troops have been building roads and bridges.

They are scheduled to be relieved by a fresh formation of military engineers. Some 250 of the new troops left Japan Friday for Bangkok to link up with an advance party of 350 of their colleagues.

Meanwhile, Khmer Rouge guerrillas have vowed to block U.N.-organised elections in Cambodia scheduled for next month and said violence would worsen in coming weeks.

Clintons back in Little Rock after Hugh Rodham's death

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — President Bill Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton flew to Arkansas after the death of her father, who suffered a stroke nearly three weeks ago.

Hugh Rodham, 82, died Wednesday night.

A memorial service was scheduled for Friday afternoon at first United Methodist Church in Little Rock. The funeral was tentatively scheduled for Saturday afternoon at Court Street United Methodist Church in Scranton, Pa., Mr. Rodham's hometown, with burial to follow at the family plot at Washburn Street Cemetery.

Mr. Rodham suffered the stroke on March 19, and Mrs. Clinton had spent the first 16 days

of his hospitalisation in Little Rock, returning to Washington Sunday. She missed several meetings of her health care task force to be with her father, and the White House said earlier this month the task force's report would be delayed beyond its May 3 deadline.

The president made two short trips, here to be with his family. The Clintons brought their daughter, Chelsea, with them Thursday, as well as Deputy White House Counsel Vince Foster and White House Personnel Director Bruce Lindsey. Both are Clinton family friends.

Mrs. Clinton, 45, is the eldest of three children of Mr. Rodham and his wife, Dorothy.

Yeltsin offers to mediate in Karabakh dispute

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has offered to mediate in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, his spokesman said Friday.

In a message to Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and his Azeri counterpart Abulfaz Elchibey, Mr. Yeltsin called for an immediate ceasefire followed by serious peace talks.

The Russian leader called for "all internal and external frontiers" to be respected and ruled out any attempt to set preconditions for negotiations, the spokesman said in a statement.

Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev brokered peace talks between Armenian and Azeri delegations in Russia Thursday and announced afterwards that the two sides had agreed to a ceasefire from noon (0800 GMT) Friday.

But Armenia's Foreign Minister Vahan Papazyan told the Russian Interfax News Agency in Yerevan that Thursday's discussion resulted only in a verbal accord for a meeting between the Armenian and Azeri prime ministers. "Nobody signed any agreement," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman said Friday that Russia was ready to provide humanitarian help and increase its efforts for a political solution.

"He offered his services as mediator if that met the understanding and support of those taking part in the conflict."

TASS quoted an Armenian spokesman as saying Armenia welcomed Mr. Yeltsin's initiative.

Armenia says the fighting in and around Karabakh is between local Armenians and the Azeris and it is not involved itself. Robert Kocharyan, head of the Armenian Defence Committee in the enclave, told TASS earlier by telephone the committee had not been informed about any ceasefire.

There was no immediate information on whether the ceasefire was being observed on the ground. Azeri reaction was not immediately available.

Meanwhile Turkey is keeping a wary eye on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, saying the stability of the Caucasus and Ankara's regional interests are threatened by what it calls "Armenian expansionism."

Islam neither popular nor well-known in U.S. — poll

WASHINGTON (AP) — Islam is not well known and not popular with Americans, according to an opinion poll by the American Muslim Council.

It ranked as the least popular of eight religious faiths listed in the survey but 41 per cent of those questioned said their attitude toward Muslims was undecided.

This means that Islam is among the least known faiths in America and that U.S. Muslims still have an opportunity to gain a favourable image of it, said council Executive Director Abdul Rahman Alamoudi. The council commissioned the Nationwide Telephone Survey last month by the New Hartford, N.Y., consulting firm of John Zogby Group International.

"The silver lining," among otherwise sobering findings in the survey, Mr. Alamoudi told a news conference, is that nearly half of all Americans have not formed an opinion about Islam or Muslims, and "the more they know us the more they like us."

This was borne out by more than twice as many college graduates — 37 per cent — reporting favourable impressions of Muslims as those with high school education or less, he said. Overall, 23.4 per cent of the 905 people questioned at random said they had a favourable impression of Muslims and 35.8 per cent unfavourable. The margin for error was plus or minus three per cent.

Roman Catholics drew a 66.7 per cent favourable response, 16.9 unfavourable and 16 per cent unsure or undecided.

The percentage responses to

other religious groups:
Presbyterian 65, 12, 23.
Lutheran 60, 10, 30.
Jewish 52, 20, 28.
Fundamentalist Christian 39, 24, 37.
Mormon 35, 33, 32.
Hindu 23, 31, 45.

The poll had been planned prior to the Feb. 26 New York World Trade Centre bombing but was conducted on Mar. 16-23 with additional questions prompted by the Muslim connections of the suspects arrested.

Because of the bombing, "I expected Muslims to be blown away in the poll — to use a New York expression — and was quite surprised they were not," said the polling firm president, John Zogby, a New Yorker of Lebanese Christian ancestry. "Most striking was the number of respondents who had no opinion," about Muslims.

"We were very scared," that the New York bombing would be blamed on the Muslim community as a whole, Mr. Alamoudi said in objecting to media identification of the suspects mainly by religious faith.

"Americans are told about Muslims only when a Muslim does something wrong. This negative stereotype ought to be corrected," he said, noting that Muslims make up one-fifth of the world population and number 5-7 million in the United States.

Asked if the United States should be more sympathetic to Israel, to the Palestinians or to neither, an overwhelming 70 per cent of respondents favoured neither or were unsure. Israel was favoured by 20.5 per cent and the Palestinians by 8.4 per cent.

COLUMN

U.S. government seeks more LUST money

WASHINGTON (AP) — Waste, fraud and abuse is one thing. But what's this \$75.4 million appropriation for LUST in President Bill Clinton's 1994 budget? There it is on page 55 of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) summary of its budget: "The Leaking Underground Storage Tank from underground storage tanks..." Oh, LUST is up this year. Last year's federal budget provided \$75 million for it.

Filming of final scene of Cheers ends in tears

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Filming of the final scene of Cheers ended in tears as Ted Danson, Kirstie Alley and other cast members bade farewell to the 11-year-old situation comedy. Most of the 90-minute episode, featuring the return of Shelley Long as the intellectual barmaid Diane Chambers, was shot last week because of the actress' time constraints. But the final scene for the May 20 finale was shot Wednesday following filming of the second-to-last episode. Former Paramount Studios chief Brandon Tartikoff and Doonesbury cartoonist Gary Trudeau were among the extras seated at the bar for that episode. Woody Harrelson, who plays Woody the bartender, said just reading through the final script was "heavy." "Boy, did I cry just bawled my eyes out," he said. Harrelson said he will miss his fellow cast members terribly, but he's not entirely sorry the nation's most popular TV bar will be closing down after 271 episodes on NBC. In the past few years, the work has been "just totally unchallenging," he said.

New cream takes 'ouch' out of needles

WASHINGTON (AP) — Doctors now can give children something more than lollipops or balloons to soothe the sting of needles: A pain-killing cream that stops the "ouch." The Swedish anesthetic, which is rubbed on the skin to deaden it before a needle prick, is newly available to U.S. doctors and pharmacists.

The manufacturer announced Thursday. The drug costs \$1 to \$3 per application and requires a prescription. "It is a magic cream," said Dr. Linda Jo Rice, director of Pain Management at the non-profit Children's National Medical Centre. "Now you can take your kid to the doctor and it won't hurt, and that puts an end to the dread and the screaming."

The cream called EMLA, short for eutectic mixture of local anesthetics, is applied to a patch of skin and covered with a bandage. Within an hour, it deadens the skin. Feeling returns within about two hours. EMLA was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last Dec. 30, said FDA spokeswoman Monica Revell. Children's National Medical Centre is leading additional studies on children in more than 160 hospitals to determine the best uses for the pain killer. Preliminary results show the children consistently report diminished pain from needles, Dr. Rice said. EMLA already is used in 22 other countries, including Canada, said Dr. Gillian L. Black-Noller, associate director of clinical research for Astra USA. The drug is made by Astra USA, a subsidiary of AB Astra of Sweden based in Westborough, Md.

He accused officer Laurence Powell of pummeling Mr. King excessively bashing in his face, then filing a false report. He denounced officer Timothy Wind for kicking the helpless Mr. King as he lay beaten on the ground, then lying about it. He depicted Sgt. Stacey Koon as abandoning his duty to stop the beating.

U.S. policemen branded brutes who inflicted street justice on King

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A prosecutor portrayed four white policemen as pitiless brutes who inflicted street justice on black motorist Rodney King. But a defence lawyer called them "sacred lambs" and suggested Mr. King was to blame for last year's riots.

During closing arguments in the officers' federal trial, assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Clymer said the four went "far beyond" the force necessary to arrest King. "These defendants taught Rodney King a lesson," Mr. Clymer said. He added that they concocted elaborate lies to cover up their misdeeds.

Mr. King was clubbed, kicked and shocked with an electric stun gun after police chased and stopped his speeding car on March 3, 1991. A neighbour's videotape of the beating was broadcast worldwide. When the officers were acquitted of most charges in a state trial last year, three days of deadly rioting ensued in which more than 50 people died and thousands of businesses were destroyed.

Police have ordered extraordinary security measures to begin when the jury starts deliberations.

Mr. Clymer replayed the videotape, urging jurors to watch it repeatedly during their deliberations and to convict all four officers of violating King's civil rights.

Defence lawyer Ira Salzman told jurors that the officers were denied a tool to subdue suspects when the police department restricted use of the controversial chokehold but never replaced it with another technique.

"These sacrificial lambs are foisted on the public altar of justice to pay for negligence" by police management, Mr. Salzman said.

Mr. Salzman said Mr. King was headed for Hansen Dam, a place he had visited in childhood, when he was stopped for speeding. "Because of that, people died. People lost their homes because someone wanted to go to Hansen Dam without interruption," Mr. Salzman said.

He said Mr. King accused the officers of racial epithets to inflame jurors. "This case has never been about race," Mr. Salzman insisted.

Mr. King testified during the federal trial that the officers uttered racial slurs when they beat him. But under cross-examination, Mr. King said he wasn't sure they used racial epithets.

Mr. Clymer's and Mr. Salzman's summations lasted about three hours each, pushing back the other three defence lawyers' closing arguments and government rebuttal to Friday and possibly delaying the judge's instructions to the jury until Saturday.

U.S. District Judge John G. Davies said he and the jury would work through the weekend if necessary.

During his summation, Mr. Clymer called officer Theodore Brisend a coward who stomped Mr. King "to become one of the boys."

He accused officer Laurence Powell of pummeling Mr. King excessively bashing in his face, then filing a false report. He denounced officer Timothy Wind for kicking the helpless Mr. King as he lay beaten on the ground, then lying about it. He depicted Sgt. Stacey Koon as abandoning his duty to stop the beating.

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Kim junior takes top military post in N. Korea

SEOUL (R) — Kim Jong-Il, son and heir-apparent of North Korea's Stalinist leader Kim Il-Sung, was elected to the reclusive nation's top military post Friday.

The state Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored in Tokyo, reported that the younger Kim had taken over from his father as chairman of the National Defence Commission, a move which consolidates his position as the head of the military.

"Comrade Kim Jong-Il, supreme commander of the Korean People's Army, was elected chairman of the National Defence Commission...at the fifth session of the ninth Supreme People's Assembly (of North Korea) today," the dispatch said.

It gave no further details of the rubber-stamp parliament's decision.

Mr. Kim Il-Sung remains State President and general secretary of the Korean Workers' Party, the other two major pillars of North Korean society.

Analysts in Seoul said it was another stage in the dynastic transfer of leadership in Pyon-

gyang from Kim Il-Sung to his 51-year-old son, who has reportedly been behind North Korea's recent brinkmanship over its nuclear weapons programme.

"This means Kim junior has complete power over the military. The army is his, and as far as we know, that's bad news," a senior Western diplomat said.

They said some elements of the military were opposed to Kim Jong-Il as he lacked the military background of his father, who is hailed in North Korea as a leading anti-Japanese guerrilla during Tokyo's 1910-45 occupation of the Korean peninsula.

Little is known about Kim junior, apart from his preference for elevator shoes, a specially designed Mao suit and a bouffant hair style. But his degree of support in the army is seen as the key element in the eventual transfer of power from Il-Sung to Jong-Il.

"If the military does not turn against Kim Jong-Il after his father's death, North Korea could keep its system for ever."

one North Korean defector told a Western journalist recently.

"But Kim junior's recent posturing over the nuclear issue and Team Spirit would indicate he has gained popularity in the armed forces just now," a Seoul-based academic said.

Mr. Kim Jong-Il is reported by Korea-watchers to be behind Pyongyang's declaration of "semi-war" against South Korea last month during Team Spirit South Korean-U.S. military exercises south of the tense Korean border.

He is also thought to have masterminded North Korea's withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) rather than opening two suspected nuclear plants to international inspection.

The move heightened suspicions in Seoul that North Korea had either succeeded in building a nuclear weapon or was on the verge of doing so.

North Korea has denied this and accused the IAEA of wanting to spy on military facilities under

U.S. instigation.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which polices the NPT, this week referred North Korea's refusal to allow inspection of two plants to the U.N. Security Council.

The Council could impose punitive economic sanctions but there is no immediate sign it was contemplating such action.

The Security Council Thursday issued a low-key statement expressing concern over North Korea's refusal to open its facilities to nuclear inspectors and asking for further negotiations.

But the 15-member body took no action on the insistence of China, which does not want Council involvement and is attempting to resolve the situation through private talks with North Korea, diplomats said.

Asked why the statement was so mild, Council President Jamsheed Marker, Pakistan's ambassador, said, "The main reason is a desire that we should continue to persuade North Korea."

Scientists find bubble boy gene

BOSTON (AP) — Genetic material from a boy who died after spending his entire life in a protective bubble has helped scientists find the gene that caused his rare disease, which robs the body of all defences. Researchers estimate that this gene accounts for about half of all cases of severe combined immune deficiency disease, or SCID, which occurs in about one in every 100,000 births. The discovery is the latest in a rapid series of